

## The Rise of the Dragon Lords

### Chapter 1: The New Friend.

30 July 1996 A.D., 7:00AM

“BOY!” Uncle Vernon yelled up the stairs of number 4 Privet Drive when he opened the door to a pink haired girl dressed in muggle clothing who showed up at the front door that fine July morning.

Harry came down stairs in his standard clothing, his hair still sticking up everywhere and his glasses sitting crooked on his nose. “Yes Uncle Vernon?”

“Wat’cher’doin’ Harry?” the pink haired girl said seeing Harry on the stairs still half a sleep. “Thought I’d spend my shift here with you instead of in the bushes outside.”

Harry smiled at Tonks one of his new friends or more to the point his only friend this summer with Hermione and Ron off somewhere in the world and everyone else not talking to him to give him ‘time’ to get over Sirius’s death. “Yeah sure. Come on up to my room so the Dursleys won’t bother you.”

Tonks had broken the Orders rules for most of the summer and had spent time with Harry getting to know him better and taking him out every now and then to get him away from his Uncle. This served to make Harry like her more and more with each time she took him out to dinner.

“A little early for that isn’t it Harry?” Tonks said with a smile.

Harry blushed, “Not like that and besides I can’t use magic and I was wondering if you can do something to my room for me?”

“Sure, I don’t see why not.” Tonks said following Harry up to his small room. “What do you need done?” She said after entering the smallest room of number 4.

“Well, could you make the room a little larger and some more furniture would be nice. If you can that is.” Harry said sitting on his bed watching the woman across from him.

Tonks looked around the room taking in the fact that Harry had just enough room for his trunk and bed and a small desk and nothing else. His clothes were all over the place and his books were hidden under them. “I can do that, lover boy, and if you like I can make a whole house in this one room.”

“Thanks. If you can Tonks then do it while I get breakfast. Be back in a minute if that is ok?” Harry said from the door.

“Bring me back a drink if you don’t mind and then we well get started on this room.” She said back pulling out her wand and starting to make the room larger as Harry walked out the door.

Harry came back a little while later with a glass of water for Tonks. Entering his room the echo from the large space that greeted him was a nice surprise. Tonks was standing in the middle of the 20’x 20’ space with Harry’s old bed and desk next to her.

“Hey, Lover boy. So what do you think?” Tonks said after taking the glass of water from Harry and drinking half of it.

“I like and now to fill it if you would. I will leave that to you if you like, just have it in my colours. Black, silver and blue if that is ok? I have to go clean the basement for my Aunt today.” Harry said after looking at the space he had now and then at Tonks.

Tonks smiled at him at the free range she had over his room. “Ok, Harry. I’ll try to stay on those colours you gave me but why are you cleaning the basement?”

“I have a deal with my relatives. I can do what ever I want but I must do one chore a week on a list and today is my one chore, so have fun.” Harry said leaving the room and heading down to the basement. Tonks nodded and started to transfigure some chairs from old paper lying on the floor.

Harry had been cleaning the basement for an hour when he found a box with his mother's name on it. "What is this?" he said pulling it out from under the shelf.

Opening it he looked inside to see books and a letter on top of it. All addressed to him. Looking around Harry carried the box upstairs and to his room without the Dursleys spotting him.

When Harry walked through the door to his room he found a large lounge room with four black leather chairs with silver trim around a fireplace and a low coffee table in front of the chairs. To the back of the room were two doors that had not been in the room before. Looking at the walls he saw that they have been painted in a dark blue with a light blue trim. On the left of the fireplace was a painting of Lily, which by the looks of it was painted when she was a few months pregnant with Harry. On the right hand side of the fire was one of James. In the paintings both wore robes of deep green, on Lily's with a lighting blue trim and James with a darker green trim.

To Harry's surprise over the fireplace was a painting of a symbol he had been working on because of a dream he had at the start of the summer. The painting had a silver dragon on a creamy white background its wings half spread out and head held high and over its head was a twin-bladed sword. Both blades of the sword bent so they were pointed down a little.

"How did she find that?" Harry said out loud.

"You left it on your desk and when I saw it I did that for you. Do you like it?" Tonks said, coming from one of the doors that was new in the wall.

"Thank you and yes, I like it. Even the colour of the dragon is right... anyway how have you been going in here?" Harry said after looking at the dragon one last time.

"Well, I thought that you might like some more privacy so your bed is now through here and you also have a study through the other door." she said pointing to the door she had come out of and then to the one on the far left.

“Thank you again for all this. So let’s see what I am sleeping in now.” Harry said walking by her and into the room.

It was painted in the same blue as the lounge room and the bed was a large queen size thing with black sheets and silver trim like most of the furniture. Next to the bed was a lighter blue table with a large lamp on it. The window looked like it belonged in Hogwarts more than in Privet Drive and in the left hand corner was Hedwig’s cage and on the other wall was a chest of draws and a closet for his clothes.

“Tonks this is great! Thank you and now how did you go in this study?”

Tonks blushed at the compliment and led the way to the other door in the room. Opening the door showed a room with a dark silver paint job that could be seen under all the book shelves on the wall but only half of them had books on them, the other half had scrolls tied with ribbons of all colours. To the middle of the room was a dark wood desk with a large black leather chair behind it and in front of the desk were two leather chairs like the ones in the living room. The floor for this room was hardwood unlike the other where it was a dark blue almost black carpet.

“Where did all these books come from?” Harry asked looking over some of the titles.

“I when back to H.Q for a little bit to get some thing for the room and while I was there Dumbledore gave me them after hearing I was doing this for you.” Tonks said from the door watching Harry as he looked around the room.

“Most of them if not all of them are about light magic I’m willing to bet.” Harry said to Tonks when he got back to her after looking around the room.

“Why does that bother you Harry?” Tonks asked placing a hand on his shoulder.

“Because I think there is a third form of magic.” Harry said with a questioning look on his face.

“What sort of magic Harry?” Tonks asked turning him around to look her in the eye and resting both hands on his shoulder.

“Grey magic.” Harry said looking into Tonks deep blue eyes.

## Chapter 2: Birthday

31 July 8:00AM 1996 A.D

The next morning Harry walked into his living room to see Tonks layed out in one of the chair's fast asleep still dressed in the same cloths as yesterday, her face buried under one arm like a bird to block the light.

"I think I'll let her sleep." Harry said after walking out of the room and down stairs for breakfast on this his 16th birthday.

When Harry got back up to his lounge room he saw that Tonks was still asleep. Sitting in the chair next to her Harry looked her over seeing that she had shifted since he had left the room.

Her hair was a light brown but the same length and style and her nose was smaller more flush to her face, her ears were small and closer to her head as well. Her eyes were about the same shape as he recalled and her lips were fuller and looked softer than before. The rest of her looked the same as always.

Just then her eyes snapped open to show a neutral gray colour. The moment she saw Harry watching her, her eyes shifted colour to the blue they usually showed and her hair flushed into the bubblegum pink. Her nose grew out a little and her lips were not as soft looking before her ears shifted into little points like an elf's from legends.

"Harry! How long have you been there?" Tonks asked with a little fear in her voice hoping that he hadn't seen her as she really looked.

"Just a few minutes. Is that what you really look like Tonks when your not like this now?" Harry asked as gently as possible.

Tonks nodded before saying anything. "Please don't tell anyone. You are the first person to see my true form other than my parents."

"I swear I will not tell anyone with out your permission first Tonks. I like to think that we are good enough friends for that." Harry replied to her as he got up and walked over to the fireplace to look at the symbol over it.

Tonks looked relieved at this and got up and walked next to Harry as he kept his eyes on that painting. "Why are you so interested in that painting? I mean, I did paint it but it can't be that good."

"I think I've seen it before now Tonks and just so that you know it is a very good painting even if it is done with magic." Harry said still looking at the painting "Can you get Dumbledore or Moody to come here some time soon Tonks?"

"I think I can. What time is it anyway?" she said while stretching her arms above her head and Harry heard her back crack all the way up.

"It's about 8:30. Why?" Harry said turning from her and going to the box he got the other day from the basement.

"WHAT?! I was meant to report in over an hour ago..." Tonks cried as she started to run to the main door of Harry's room.

"Tonks, if you get time do stop by any time." Harry yelled out after her as she ran out his door and down the stairs.

Harry sighed and set aside the box, heading for his new study since he wanted a friend with him when he opened his mother's letter.

It was noon before someone knocked on the main door to Harry's rooms. 'Can't be my uncle. He never knocks.' Harry thought getting up and started to walk from his desk in the study and out into the living room.

Opening the door showed Mad-eye Moody with Tonks standing behind him. Tonks looked the same as she always did while Moody was dressed in his muggle clothes and looked like the cat that got into the cream. A large toothy smile was plastered all over his face.

"Ah. Hi there. Nice of you to come so soon and do I want to know what happened to my relatives?" Harry said after letting them into his room.

Tonks after entering fell into Harry's arms laughing and only said one word "Ferrets."

Harry looked at the young woman in his arms then at Moody who was over by the fire looking at the painting. "The amazing bouncing ferret back from holidays, Moody?" Harry asked with a smile.

Moody looked at Harry and smiled a very scary smile and chuckled. "Yes it is and now it comes with two partners in the act."

Harry fell over at this and joined Tonks on the floor in a laughing fit but still managed to say "What did they do to get turned into ferrets?"

Moody walked over to the two laughing idiots and looked down on them. "Well, I did ask to come in nicely but your uncle would not let me in so I turned him into a ferret. Then your cousin and aunt showed up as well and started to yell at me about what I did so I turned them into ferrets as well and then we came up here to see this painting of yours."

Harry nodded from the floor, Tonks sitting next to him quietly having recovered from her laughing fit.

Moody nodded and walked back to the fireplace. "Tonks, you can go and do what you wanted to do. I should be fine here until later."

Tonks nodded and helped Harry up and then led him over to one blank wall in the room where she pulled out her wand and waved it over the wall. A door appeared in the wall and like the others it was painted a light blue and had a silver door handle.

Tonks opened the door and on the other side was a room decorated in light peach paint and gold trim. The bed dominating the room was the same size as Harry's but had pink sheets instead of black. The bedside table and chest of draws were the same colours as the walls and the floor was a light cream.

"Ah, Tonks what's with the room?" Harry asked after looking around the room for a minute.

Tonks walked over to Harry and said in a low voice. "I asked if I could stay with you for the rest of the summer to keep you company and to teach you Occlumency and some base Auror training and Dumbledore said I could. If you are willing."



Harry smiled at her and said in just as low tones. "I would like that but I have a condition. You must look normal as often as you can for me, ok?"

Tonks nodded and led the way to Moody as he took one of the chairs and placed it in front of the fire. Harry and Tonks each took a chair as well.

Moody looked over to them and then back to the painting. "Harry do you know what that symbol represents?"

Harry also looked at the symbol. "No, that is why I asked for you or Dumbledore to come and tell me about it. I could have sworn that I have seen it somewhere before."

"I'd be surprised if you hadn't since its been hanging on the wall of the fourth floor of Hogwarts for as long as the school's been standing. You see this is the symbol of the last Dragon Lord. No one knows his name, only his dragon's name was known. A beautiful name she had as I recall. It was Silvenestri. She and her master were the last of the Dragon Lords and Silver Dragons." Moody was looking at the painting with a slight smile on his face.

Harry looked at the painting then at Moody before saying anything. "What is known about the last Dragon Lord and his dragon?"

Moody glanced at Harry then at Tonks. "Would you make us some drinks, Tonks? This will take some time."

Tonks nodded and waved her wand over the coffee table and three glasses and a jug of pumpkin juice appeared on the table with a plate of sandwiches.

Moody nodded his thanks then taking one of the glasses he started to talk. "No one know where the last Dragon Lord came from, just that he vanished over 2,500 years ago after he sealed the last portal to the Realms of the Dead. Legend says he was a tall man for the time, meaning that he would stand not much taller than you Harry. That was about all anyone knows of him because his face was covered by his cloak. It was his dragon that ensured everyone knew of him. The dragon was no older than five years but was flying and using some of

it magic such as being able to change it's form to a little girl with silver hair and the eyes were the colour of star light. You see Silver dragons don't get any use of innate powers until around twenty years after they hatch. After the portal was sealed the Dragon Lord's last words were carved into a stone near the site where Hogwarts now stands. 'My friend and I will be back when I am needed most.' That was what he said and then he vanished with his dragon. The stone is still there under the castle to this day. I have seen it with my own eye." Moody finished his drink and looked at Harry and Tonks who were looking at him in awe at the tale of the last Dragon Lord.

Harry was the first to say anything about the story of the last Dragon Lord. "Moody, was there anything about the Dragon Lords that made them different from normal wizards and witches?"

Moody smiled at this then looked at Tonks. "Well for starters all of the Dragon Lords were male and they could only have children with a Metamorphmagus..."

"WHAT! That would mean that Dragon Lord's had to get other lord's to replace them some other way, right? I mean my type of witch or wizard is rare, even now." Tonks said, looking down at Moody seeing that she had jump up at this.

Moody nodded at her and continued "Yes, that is true. Metamorphmagus were rare even back then but never the less only a Metamorphmagus could survive childbirth, both mother and child. Any other witch would die in birth and the child would as well. Now all Dragon Lords had one thing in common, they all were Parseltongue's. Seeing as that it is the ability to talk to reptiles, not just snakes, and dragons are just one big reptile." Moody refilled his glass and looked at the stunned look Harry and Tonks both had after learning about the Dragon Lords.

Moody looked at them both and after Tonks sat back down he started to talk some more about what he knew. "The other thing that Dragon Lords had that was different was that their armour and weapons were made from the shed scales of their dragons. You see the scales could be melted down and shaped like iron would have been into their weapons and armour. The most common weapon was a twin

head sword which was just two long swords or in the last lord's case, two scimitars joined at the hilts making a very deadly weapon in the right hands."

Harry looked back at the painting and then at Moody who was starting to get up and head to the door. "Ah, Moody thanks for telling me all this and do stop by again." Moody nodded and was about to walk out the door when Harry said "Oh, before you go, do turn my relatives back to normal on your way out."

Moody smiled and nodded while walking out closing the door behind him.

Tonks had by then walked over to the fire and was looking into the flames while saying in a low voice. "We could use him now."

Harry heard this and looked at Tonks before saying anything. "I know but we don't have him now." Harry looked away from her and over to the box he had found the other day. "Tonks, can you do something for me?"

Tonks looked at Harry to see him looking at the box he had with him yesterday. "What do you want Harry?"

"For you to be with me when I open my mother's letter in that box." Harry replied without looking at her.

Tonks looked at Harry then to the box again before answering. "I'll be here for you."

Thank you to the following reviews:

Quills'N Ink, j.c, darkov, Gohan00 and Toras.

I'll post as soon as by next chapter is checked so enjoy what I have so far.

## Chapter 3: Letters

31 July 1996 14:00PM A.D

Harry got out of his chair and walked over to the box, Tonks not far behind him.

After getting the box and putting it on the coffee table he opened it to see the letter sitting on top of the books, right where he left it. After pulling the letter out Harry looked at the books inside the box and started to pull them out one at a time. First was a thick book called 'Dragons of Power', next was a thinner book that looked like a dairy of same kind, and after that was another thick book titled 'Dragon Lords - Myth or Fact.' The last book was thinner than 'Dragons of Power' but still thicker than the dairy the title was in gold lettering and read 'The Last Lord'.

Tonks had been looking over the books as Harry had removed them and was now looking at the last one when Harry said, "Well that is freaky. I mean what are the chances of talking about them then finding this lot?"

"I don't know but there is a cloak in the bottom of this box." Tonks said pulling out a cloak of silver cloth with gray runes stitched along the hemline. The inside of the cloak had a black silk layer and to Harry's surprise there was a sword holder on the left hand side.

After looking at the cloak Harry put it aside and picked up the letter then looked at Tonks. "I think I'm ready to do this now. Thanks for being here."

Tonks nodded and took the seat next to Harry as he opened the letter and started to read out loud.

*My dear Angel*

*If you are reading this then you have reached your 16th birthday and your father and I have died. I would like to start by saying that I am sorry that we are not there for you in this time of danger but know that I and your father will always be with you in your heart.*

*Now for what this letter is about. I am a Seer to a lesser extent and I know that what is in this box will help you over the coming year in your fight. The books contained in this box are about the Dragon Lords and I searched all of England to find them. Use them well.*

*The cloak is ancient and was all that was left of the last Dragon Lord after he vanished over 2500 year ago. It is authentic.*

*Ok now that you know something about the cloak it is time for you to know something about the books in the box.*

*The book 'Dragons of Power' is a reference work on the true dragons of the world and what their individual powers are. Next is 'Dragon Lords - Myth or Fact'. It recounts some of the legends of the Dragon Lords and their lady's and describes what their powers were. 'The Last Lord' is a discourse on all that is known about the last Dragon Lord to walk the Earth and his Dragon Silvenestri. The last book is for you and you alone to read. From what I can tell it is written in Parseltongue and I know through my Sight that you can speak that Tongue. I warn you that no one is to read this book other than you.*

*I have to go now but there is one more thing that I have to say to you. You must go to the safe house and search there for a red diary. This diary is for you and I have enchanted it to talk to you. I have imbued it with all of the knowledge I have learned in my life. I hope that we can be good friends through the link this book provides so until we meet through the medium of the book know that I love you.*

*Love from Lily Eve Potter.*

Harry was looking at the letter with tears flowing down his cheeks and Tonks had one arm around his shoulders hugging him gently and offering words of comfort as he buried his head in her shoulder.

"It's ok Harry. If you like I can go get that diary for you. That is if you want the book?"

Harry nodded and looked at Tonks through his watering eyes. "Thank you, Tonks. Yes you can get the diary if you would while I sort out the books here."

"Ok, Harry. I should be able to find it without too much trouble, so I'll be back some time soon. Keep out of trouble until I can get back because I still have your birthday present to give you from me and some from the others in the Order as well." Tonks got up after making sure that Harry was okay and walking to the fireplace she threw in some floo powder. "Your fire place is keyed to Hogwarts Castle, Diagon Alley and Platform 9 ¾." She told him. "I will go to Hogwarts and use a fire place there to reach the safe house. Won't be long." Calling out Hogwarts castle she walked into the fire and vanished.

Harry pick up the cloak and after a moment of wondering if he dared to try on so ancient and valuable an item on he threw it around his shoulders. To his surprise the cloak settled comfortably about him and fitted so well it could have been made for him. Looking closer at the cloth Harry noticed a silver thread running all throughout the weave making it strong and keeping it flexible and free moving all around. Pulling the hood up over his head, he found the hood was deeper than he thought and it fell down over his face hiding it from view.

Harry made his way to his bedroom and admired the cloak and how well it fitted him for a few minutes before returning to the lounge room. He had not long returned when the fireplace flared and Tonks stepped out of the flames with the book Lily had said would be at the safe house.

Tonks had a long look at Harry in the cloak and nodded her approval. "Well I must say it suits you. You will keep it?" She said with a warm smile then handed him the book "Just where she said it would be. I hope it helps you out a bit."

Harry nodded his thanks and was about to say something when Pig came flying in through his open bedroom door and started to do speedy circles around the room. "How nice of them to send me a letter. Tonks can you make me a tennis racket please?"

Tonks was watching Pig careering around the room in reckless circles. "Why do you need a tennis racket?"

"To stop that from flying around the room." Harry returned, throwing the hood of his new cloak back from his face while still looking at the tiny owl.

Tonks shrugged and turned one of the glasses on the coffee table into the requested tennis racket and then handed it to Harry.

Harry smiled at her then walked a few steps from her, watching the owl and judging where he would soon fly. Tonks watched as Harry tensed and quick as a flash held the tennis racket up and Pig hit it head on knocking himself out of the air and onto the floor where he sat looking rather crossed eyed.

Harry smiled very pleased with himself and picked up Pig then took the letter from his leg while walking over to Tonks and handed her the cross eyed owl.

Tonks gently took Pig and looked him over then decided that he was fine just a little dazed. "You know Harry, I think your friend would be rather upset if he found out you got his letter with a tennis racket." she said with a smile.

Harry smiled back and was about to open the letter when his door flew open. His uncle barged into the room and was about to shout something at Harry when he noticed the size of Harry's room and the fact that the same woman that had left this morning through the front door was back sitting next to Harry.

"BOY! What have you done to my house and what is that freak doing here?" Uncle Vernon yelled at Harry.

Harry looked up from the letter and shrugged, un phased by his uncles screams. "Tonks will be staying here for the rest of the summer and as for the room, I have done nothing to this room. Tonks did it. Now was there something you needed Uncle Vernon?"

"What! I am not having another of you freaks in this house! It's bad enough with one of you. I am not having a second one."

"I hate to tell you this but she is staying here and you can't do a thing about it. What did you come here for?" Harry moved to stand in front of Tonks.

"I wanted to know what that man did up here after using his freakish powers on us. Now if she is staying here she gets her own meals with her own food, not our food got it?" Uncle Vernon said and without waiting for an answer left the room, slamming the door behind him.

Harry sighed and looked apologetically at Tonks who was looking as though she wanted to do something more than just turn his uncle in to a ferret. "Tonks, please don't listen to him. He's always like that. Let's see what Ron and Hermione have to say about not writing all summer?"

Tonks nodded and sat down in one of the chairs as Harry settled in the chair next to her and opened the letter from Ron. Harry read the letter quickly to himself and he gave a sigh and handed it to the waiting Tonks to read while he looked at the fire.

Tonks read the letter and looked over to Harry who was looking at the fire in deep thought. "Well, they did tell you that they were going out together." She looked at Harry who nodded briefly. "Any way, I'm going to get your birthday presents so don't go anywhere." She said with a smile.

Harry returned the smile and watched her walk over to her room or more to the point he watched the sway of her hips as she walked.

Tonks came out a few minutes later with four boxes floating along behind her. With a gentle smile she walked over to him and took the seat next to him. "Happy Birthday, Lover Boy. We have a present from Ron and Hermione, one from Mr and Mrs Weasley as well as one from Remus and last of all, my present. Go on, open one." Tonks said while pointing to each box.

Harry looked over the boxes and then at Tonks before pulling the one from Ron and Hermione closer and opening it. Inside was a book and some Every Flavour Beans. "Well, that is the norm for them." He commented and opened the present from Mr and Mrs Weasley and found inside some of Hagrid's rock cake and some of Mrs Weasley's



cakes as well. "I hope Hagrid has gotten better at cooking." Harry said then noticed that Tonks was eyeing the cakes.

"Tonks, have you had some of Hagrid's cooking before?" Harry asked.

Tonks nodded. "Yes, back when I was going to Hogwarts as a student, over five years ago now."

Harry looked at her surprised. "That would mean that you would have been going to Hogwarts when I started, right?"

"Yep. You had just started your first year and I had just started my 7th year. Anyway, open the rest of your presents." Tonks said then handed Harry his present from Remus.

Harry nodded and thought to himself, 'I'll have to talk to her about her school years later.'

Remus's present turned out to be some books on how to fight Dark Arts users. Also included was a book on all of the pranks the Marauder's had done while at Hogwarts. "That well be fun." Harry said after seeing the books title.

Tonks took the book from Harry and raised an eyebrow. "You know that Fred and George would kill to have this book." she said with a smile "Now it's my turn. Go on, open my present."

Harry looked at the smallest box of them all. It was a little smaller than a shoe box and opening the box revealed a blank diary and a silver necklet with a single emerald pendant the size of his thumb. "Thanks Tonks. It's great and the diary will come in handy. Thank you."

Tonks smiled at him and gave him a quick hug and peck on the cheek. "Your welcome Harry. So what do you say to some dinner before looking through some of your new books?"

Harry nodded and led the way down stairs and to the kitchen in time to see the Dursley's sitting down to dinner. Harry winced trying to hide his blushing face from her.

"Boy! I thought I told you we are not feeding that freak. Now get out of here!" Uncle Vernon yelled when Harry walked in with Tonks.

Harry just stopped in the doorway and leaned against it while Tonks walked by him and started to magically create some food and then started to cook for herself and Harry.

"Harry do..." Tonks paused when she turned to see Harry still standing in the doorway. He still wore the cloak and just for an instant Tonks could have sworn that there was an after image of someone else there. The image of what she saw was about Harry's height but looked a lot stronger and there was far more power in the eyes that seemed to watch her.

"What is it Tonks?" Harry asked after noticing that she had stopped talking and was now staring at him with an odd look in her eyes.

"Sorry. Do you have anything in particular that you want for dinner or will whatever I cook do?" Tonks said quickly moving her eyes away from Harry and back to her dinner.

"No, just what you are having will do." Harry said and looked back at his Uncle and Aunt who were eyeing Tonks working in their kitchen with worried looks.

A little while later Tonks walked out of the kitchen with a tray with two plates of lasagna in hand and two bottles of Butterbeer. "Come on Harry, let's go up to your room for this. Good night Mr and Mrs Dursley." Tonks said to them on the way out of the kitchen and made her way up to Harry's room.

After they had both eaten Harry and Tonks sat back and talked about Tonks' early days at Hogwarts and Harry's adventures at school.

It was close to midnight when Harry went to his bedroom room leaving the cloak lying over the back of the chair he had been sitting in.

Tonks watched Harry go to his room then looked at the cloak. Once again she saw the image, this time though she could make out the

eyes of the person sitting there, 'But that can't be right.' She thought, but the image was still there and she swallowed slowly.

It was Harry eyes looking back at her.

[illegible]

Thank you to all of the following reviews for your comments.

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as so i am working on another story and would as you all a question that you can answer in your reviews seeing that i wont to give him a pet that is now Hedwig.

What can be Harry's pet for the sorry i'm working on called Beholder.

A. Fire Lizard if you have read the purn books you will know that it is a small dragon that can breath fire.

B. Winged cat that was a Forgotten realms animal that is most wizards pets. forgot its real name.

C. A Ferret will they are sneaky and very good thieves and for this story Harry is a street rat.

## Chapter 4: The Beginning.

07 August 1996 12:00 PM A.D

Harry and Tonks had been staying together for a week now talking and trading story's of their lives before and after Hogwarts while flirting with each other every now and then. Along the way Harry had become very good at Occlumency over this time thanks to Tonks teaching but he still had the odd nightmare and he was thankful that Tonks was there to wake him up right after they started. They had also read all of the books that his mother had left him including the diary.

On this day the weather outside was fine but both Harry and Tonks were still inside the house reading about the dark arts and trying to work out how to get by all of Voldemort's defences.

Tonks was sitting at the desk she had made in the study after the first day of staying with Harry. She looked up to see Harry sitting at his desk reading the diary again trying to find out something about the last Dragon Lord since the diary was written by the teacher of that lord.

Harry feeling someone looking at him looked up to see Tonks watching him. "Something you wanted Tonks?" Harry asked after he could still feel her gaze on him a minute or so later.

"No. Nothing. I was just wondering what you were doing that's all." Tonks said looking away while thinking. 'Yeah and how good you are starting to look. Really good looking thanks to the training I'm putting you through and eating more often.'

"Oh, well I think I'll go for a run. Care to go with me or are you going to stay here?" Harry said getting up and closing the book as he did.

"No, you go ahead. I'll finish this and then get some lunch ready for us when you get back." Tonks said as Harry nodded and walked out of the study.

“What is it about the Dragon Lords that has you so interested Harry?” Tonks said to the room a little after he left having heard him walk out the main door of his room.

“Maybe he is looking for some new power to help against Voldemort.” A voice said from the doorway that Tonks knew well after being on the receiving end of his lectures for seven years due to her mischief at school.

Tonks turned around to see Dumbledore was standing in the study door, his blue robes still showing the signs of travelling by floo powder. “Dumbledore. What brings you here?”

“Your letter from last week. About the image of Harry you saw that day and what else you might know about this image?” Dumbledore said casting a quick cleaning charm on his robes.

Tonks sat back and thought about it before answering him. “Well now that you mention it, I recall that it was wearing some of that classic style chain mail armour.”

“Did you see anything other than that?” Dumbledore asked sitting in Harry’s chair behind his desk. “Nice chair by the way.”

Tonks nodded, accepting the compliment and thought some more. “Well the armour did look like it was made of melted silver, not the usual metal and his eyes looked more powerful but also more wise than they are now. Otherwise he looked... stronger than he is now.”

Dumbledore nodded and looked at the diary resting in front of him. “Is this one of the books that his mother gave him?” He asked pointing to the book while looking at Tonks.

Tonks nodded and walked over to one of the shelves in the room and took down the other three books Harry had gotten from his mother. “You can take these three if you like but I won’t allow you to take that one.” She said pointing to the book Dumbledore was starting to pick up.

Dumbledore looked at Tonks and then at the book before him “And why not, my dear Nymphadora?” He said knowing how much she hated her first name.

Tonks looked at Dumbledore with a very pissed look about him using her first name but said, “Because his mother stated that only he can read that but anyone can read the others.”

Dumbledore raised an eyebrow at that. “But I need to find out if he is learning any dark arts from this book and the others as well.” He said pointing to the books sitting on the other side of the table and then the diary in front of him.

“Well, I can tell you that there is no Dark Arts in these three and that last one... well you wouldn’t be able to read it any way.” Tonks said taking the diary from the table and out of Dumbledore’s reach.

“And what makes you think I can’t read that book?” Dumbledore said keeping an eye on Tonks and that particular book wondering what it could be written in for him to be unable to read it.

“Because it is written in Parseltongue.” Harry said from the doorway having just gotten back from his run around the block and a quick shower.

Dumbledore looked at Harry and nodded in greeting, noting that because he had had a shower his hair was looking tame for a change. He was dressed in some muggle clothing but also wore the silver cloak. “Well, that proves that this book needs to be looked at by me to make sure it has no dark arts spell in or on it.” He said reaching for the book in Tonks’s hands but she moved out of his reach.

“Professor, I have all ready read it three times and Tonks did perform some charms to make sure it was safe before I could read it and if I am not mistaken you can not read Parseltongue. Am I right?” Harry said taking the book from Tonks when she walked over next to him and then moved to stand a little behind him.

“True, but spells can translate it for me. Now please give it to me.” Dumbledore said holding a hand out for it looking Harry in the eyes and seeing quite clearly that Harry did not trust him any more.

“No and before you say anything I will tell you this. If you can convince my mother to give it to you then yes, you can take it but not before then.” Harry said placing the book in his cloak on the right hand side having found out that only he could open that pocket after something was placed in it.

Dumbledore looked at little put out by this and looked to Tonks to see if she would help him only to see that she was not on his side but agreed with Harry.

Tonks walked out of the study and to Harry's room and came back with the red diary Lily had giving to Harry so they could talk through it. “If you like you can try to talk Lily into letting you read that diary with this.” She said handing the book to Dumbledore an innocent smile on her face.

Harry smiled and winced remembering that he had a very long fight with his mother when he first had used it a week ago about his grades and how he was doing at school. “Thank you Tonks for getting that for me. Now if you both don't mind I have to practise my Occlumency for tonight's lesson with you.” Harry said the last part to Tonks after he removed his cloak and layed it over his chair and then left the room and went into his room, but not before causing Tonks to giving a startled jump when Harry gave her a quick slap on the backside.

“I'll get you for that.” She called back to him just before he left the room a large smile on his face and mouthing the words ‘I can't wait.’ Back at her unmindful of what Dumbledore might say.

As soon as Harry left the study the image of the older Harry appeared again sitting in the chair where the cloak was placed, a phantom red diary in his hands. Dumbledore and Tonks looked at it neither seeming surprised that it appeared to be laughing at Dumbledore as though it knew what the book before him would say. After a moment he started mouthing the words, ‘Not yet. It's not time yet.’ at them over and over again.

Dumbledore looked at the image noting the silver armour and silver cloak it wore and Harry's emerald eyes looking at him but the hair

was longer and much tamer than Harry's hair. "Who are you?" Dumbledore said to the image.

The image just looked back at him and then at Tonks and mouth the word, 'You will need each other tonight.' Then vanished with out a trace.

Tonks looked at where the image had been and then to Dumbledore who was now writing in the red leather book. She could see the replies showing up on the page but could not make them out though it seemed clear that Dumbledore was getting no where fast with his talk with Lily.

"You know Dumbledore, I have yet to talk to Lily, but from what I've been told by Harry she will not let you look at that book." Tonks said watching Dumbledore fight with the book.

After an hour Dumbledore yelled out in frustration at the book. "God this is worse than fighting Lily for real. I give! I surrender. Harry can keep the book but make sure he doesn't learns any dark arts from it." Before waiting for an answer he walked over to the fireplace and flooed back to Hogwarts, the other three books in his arms.

Tonks looked at the red leather book still open on Harry's desk. After thinking for a minute she walked over to it and picked up the quill and after re inking it wrote in the book. 'Ah. Hello. How are you Lily?'

'What? Who are you?' appeared on the paper in front of her in a neat lopped handwriting that looked to be the same that the Hogwarts letters were written in.

'My name is Tonks. I've been living with Harry over the last week, keeping him company. What did you and Dumbledore talk about?'

'Just him trying to get that book. What are you doing there anyway?'

'I've been showing Harry how to use Occlumency for his mind to give him some peace and also some of the Auror training so he can fight he-who-must-not-be-named.'



'Oh, you're that Tonks. Harry has talked about you so much every night that I think he likes you. So what do you do besides being a Auror?'

'I fight against the Death Eaters as a member of the Order and then there is teaching Harry how to fight. Not counting our flirting sessions.'

'Thank you for being there for my son and know that he will be there for you if you need him. I think I had better go. Harry should be here soon.'

‘Thank you. I hope to talk to you soon.’ Tonks had just put the book away when Harry walked in and sat in one of the chairs for that night’s lesson in Occlumency.

[illegible]

After that night's lesson Harry went to bed while Tonks sat in the lounge room thinking about what the image had said and what Lily had told her about Harry. 'Maybe he does like me as more than a friend but that can't be right. I'm five years his senior but it would be nice to be loved for me and not for what they want for a girlfriend.' She thought while looking into the fire her face slipping through the transformation into her natural looks.

Tonks was brought out of her thoughts by Harry's scream of horror from his room. "Harry!" Tonks called as she entered his room to see him sitting up in bed his face coved in sweat. "Harry it's all right. I'm here and it was just a dream." Tonks said sitting on the bed next to him, running a hand over his back to calm him down so he could tell her what happened.

“It was Voldemort and his Death Eaters.” Harry said after a while looking at the far wall his eyes showing the horror of everything he had seen. “They attacked a street in London killing anything that moved.” He paused and then looked Tonks in the eye for the first time since waking up. “He was in a house and there were pictures of you in your school robes and other clothes through your years at Hogwarts on the walls. Kneeling before him was a woman crying as

he tortured her. Her brown hair was covered in blood from the wounds caused by one of his Death Eaters hitting her and her eyes... they were your eyes.” Harry finished looking at Tonks who was starting to breakdown and cry.

“Harry, you just told me what my mother looks like.” Tonks said lowering her head and bring her hands up to her face as she started to cry out loud at the death of her mother.

“It’s alright Tonks. I’ve got you and I am sorry about what happened to your mother. I’m so sorry.” Harry said pulling her into his arms and just holding her, letting her cry on his shoulder while silently swearing that Voldemort would pay for every death that he caused.

The next morning found Tonks fast asleep next to Harry on his bed. Harry was watching her in her true form slowly running a hand through her hair as he watched her tear streaked face. ‘Why did he go after her and that street and not after my friends or where they lived? Oh, I am so sorry Tonks, but as I promised you last night, I will kill him. For you as well as for me now.’

Harry got up then without waking Tonks up and walked over to the diary of the last Copper Dragon Lord. “It’s time.” Harry said opening the book to the last page where a spell the lord had written for Harry was there, his name in small script at the bottom of the page.

Harry looked back at Tonks and then down at the spell. “I’ll be back in a few hours Tonks. Don’t worry about me.” Harry then chanted the spell out loud.

Through times veils I see

and through times veil I go,

back through space

and back through creation

to the time where the old is new

and the new is yet to be.

Tonks awoke just as Harry uttered the final words to the spell “Harry?” she said sleepily, seeing him surrounded in a mist of purple smoke “Harry!” Tonks yelled at him waking up fully as he looked at her with a smile then he was gone the book falling to the floor still open to the page of the spell as it melted into mist above the page. “Harry where have you gone? What have you done?” She said and started to cry, not noticing the owl that carried the note that would tell her of her mothers death fly into the room and wait patiently for her.

[illegible]

Hi i hope you all liked this chapter and thanks to the following reviewers.

Makotochi, styxx321, king of the damned, Lucky439, uten, Quills 'N Ink, Nutty AL, Shawn Pickett and gaul1.

Also my question is B the winded cat thank you to everyone who voted.

## Chapter 5: Death's Realm and the Last Copper.

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Harry found him self in a place of purple and black mist all around him there was no ground to stand on but Harry was standing on the mist itself. "Ok, where am I? This does not look like where I'm meant to be going. It's... nowhere." He said still in his nightclothes, thankful that he had taken a Moody approach on wands and carried his everywhere now.

**"Passing through that much time takes... well time. Now what do I have here? Another mortal passing over and gotten lost... or perhaps a very powerful time spell at work?"** A cold voice said from behind Harry.

Harry turned to see a robed and cloaked figure in black standing next to him was a white horse barded with ornate black leather riding equipment. The mount's eyes were a deep black, while its mane and tail was the same snow white colour as the rest of its body. "Who are you and where am I?"

**"Well this is the Plane of the Dead and I... well, I'm Death. This is Binky, my mount. You are Harry James Potter last of the Potter line but you are not meant to be here for... Well, I don't know. Your hourglass is not like most others. Here let me show you."** Death reached one skeletal hand into his robes and pulled out a gold hourglass but unlike all hourglasses no sand was falling from it into the lower half. This hourglass had instead a green mist within it, moving through both halves at a slow rate.

"Is that my hourglass? But... shouldn't it be filled with sand and not mist?" Harry said keeping an eye on this man claiming to be Death.

**"Well, as a matter of fact, I do have one other glass like this. I believe that you know this person. You would know him as Tom Marvolo Riddle or as more recently calls himself... Voldemort."** Death said putting the hourglass in his robes, **"Now then, young man, what are you doing here in my realm? Not that I dislike having someone to talk to every now and then."**

"Well, I read a spell to take me back 2500 years to the time of the last Dragon Lord with the intention of asking for help against Voldemort. So how do I get out of here and to where I was going?"

**"Well as I said before, some time spells simply take time to work all the way through. If you like you can come with me while you are waiting. So tell me, you do know that this spell will return you eventually to the point from which you started just a few hours after you began your journey? You will retain your youthful form just as you are now, however all of the knowledge that you gain over the time you are within the effects of the spell will remain with you."** When Harry nodded that he did indeed understand this Death continued. **"Now if you like I can give you a ride to where you need to go?"** Death said mounting Binky and offering a bony hand to Harry.

Harry looked up at the figure on the white horse, to see a skeletal hand and a skull looking at him, the eye sockets empty but for a blue light deep within them. "Thanks, but... why did I end up here when I am supposed to be going back in time and where well we be going for me to get to where I was going?"

**"Well... You are travelling back in time meaning that you have to pass through the Plane of the Dead. All of time, whether it is Past, Present or Future must pass here and we are going to ride to my home. From there you can go where ever you like in time up until the moment in time that you left with the casting of the spell."** Death said helping Harry onto Binky's back.

"Thanks. Are you really Death?" Harry asked as their rode through purple and black mist.

**"Unfortunately, yes. Call me what you want, be it Shinigami or Death or even the Grim Reaper, but know that I hope you can get that annoying Tom Riddle's soul into this realm soon because he is screwing up my books. He is still breathing you know long after he is not meant to be."** Death said as they rode up to a nice little cottage with a white picket fence and neat little black garden.

Harry stared at the nice neat beds of black flowers, the neatly trimmed black grass lawn, the black water of the small pool where he

glimpsed the delicate skeletons of gold fish swimming lazily in the black water.

Death waited for Harry to dismount from Binky first then he too dismounted and led Harry over to his cottage and within the homey building. One step within the doorway and Harry stared in amazement as he found himself in the sweeping grand entry hall of a massive castle. Spinning around he caught a glimpse of the same black garden and white picket fence he had just passed before the door closed with a resounding bang. Death uttered a deep chuckle and steered Harry to a door in the main hall that was, like most of the house, black. Harry's footsteps echoed as he crossed the black and white checked patterned floor but Death made no noise as he walked.

**"This door will take you to where you need to go. Good luck and I hope I don't see you for many years to come Harry."** Death said before walking away from Harry and passing from sight through the wall on the far side of the entry hall.

Harry blinked staring at the wall where Death had vanished, swallowing his uneasiness, but he supposed that Death really did not need a door to get around. With a sigh he looked at the door Death had brought him to and after taking a deep breath he opened it and walked through.

Death sighed a deep and resounding sigh as he watched the boy vanish through the doorway.

[illegible]

504 BC

When he could see again Harry found himself standing on a cliff top with a vast forest stretching out before him. Looking around Harry saw a cave in the mountain behind him and what looked like a fire burning within it, glowing in the late evening light of what felt like a late summer's day.

Harry looked at the sunset but stopped when he saw a massive copper shape fly up out of the forest with what looked like a buck in

his front claws. 'Wait a minute. 'Claws'? And wings?' Harry's eyes widened when he realised that he was seeing a dragon on the hunt.

The huge Copper Dragon some of its scales turning grey with age flew over Harry's head and to the cave mouth where it dropped its kill and then landed out front of the cave.

Harry watched as the great beast lowered its long serpent like neck down to the buck and with a single tug Harry heard the sound of flesh and bone being ripped from the kill.

He watched in awed silence as the Dragon started to eat its kill but his attention turned to the left of the great beast when a person appeared. With the aid of a walking stick he emerged from the cave and looked down at where Harry stood with out once looking at the dragon eating next to him.

Harry watch as the person looked at him and was shocked when the man waved a hand for Harry to come up to where he was.

He looked around for a way to get up to this person and the cave when he saw a very rocky trail leading up. It was steep and dangerous but looked to be walk able with some work and he doubted that his slippers would be any good by the time he finished the climb.

Harry looked back up to the person to see that that he had left the cave mouth and was now standing next to the Copper Dragon waiting for him. The great beast ignored the man, focusing his attention on the kill.

"Well, this is not getting me up there." Harry muttered as he started to work his way up the trail his slippers being virtually destroyed and his feet blooded within minutes but he still climbed.

Harry was right, it was a hard climb up to the cave but he got there a little after dark to see the huge Copper Dragon curled about itself fast asleep, its copper and gray hide reflecting the fire light. Its huge head was a flat wedge shape with two horns coming from above its eye ridges and large wings were folded down and close to its back. It

also had a long ridge of sharp spines running along its back marking it as a male.

'If the books my mother gave me are right'. Harry thought, noting the spine ridge.

Just then the sound of wood on rock was heard as a man in his late sixties walked over to Harry. He was dressed in chain mail armour that looked like it was made from melted copper. His cloak was the same colour as his armour and when looked at closely Harry could see copper threads running through it. "Well boy. What brings you way out into the mountains of Scotland without a weapon or provisions?" his deep Scots brogue rolled over Harry.

Looking up at the old man from where he was sitting Harry took note of his silver hair and green eyes "I... I read a spell found in the back of the diary of the last Copper Dragon Lord. He was called Copper Spear and..."

"I'm Copper Spear. How did you get my diary? I have only just now finished writing in it! So I ask again, boy. Who are you?"

"My name is Harry Potter and well... I am from the future and I came here to seek out a Dragon Lord who might help me to kill a Dark wizard called Voldemort in my time."

Copper Spear looked at Harry for a long moment then over to his dragon companion who now was snoring loudly as he slept off his latest meal. "Very well. I will do a deal with you. Should you work for me to my satisfaction for a period of no less than three years I will agree aid you in your search for a young Dragon Lord to help against this Dark Wizard. On your honour you will keep this vow and I will keep mine. "

Harry stared at the old man in shock. Three years? The old man expected him to work for three years during which time Voldemort could wreak havoc on Harry's world... He stopped at that thought, remembering the words of Death. He would return to the exact place from which he had cast the spell and only a few hours would have passed. He did have the time to serve the old man and still enlist help



against Voldemort and how else was he to meet Dragon Lords if not be introduced to them by this old man?

"I will serve you for three years and at the end of that time you will help me to find one who will assist in the battle against the Dark Lord."

"So you do not embarrass yourself and me when you front the younger Lord I will show you the way of the Dragon Lords. Let us see if the people of the future may prove to have as much honour as those who associate with Dragons in this time. From this moment on ye are my servant, boy and ye may call me Adinirahc."

Harry swallowed his fear at the power that suddenly was in the old mans voice but he gathered his courage and nodded his acceptance and followed the old man. They entered the cave that was the Dragon Lords home and would be Harry's for the next three years leaving light bloody footprints in the rock along the way.

[illegible]

## Number Four Privet Drive

Tonks looked up from the diary in hand and sighed. She was sitting in Harry's bed, the three diary's sitting before her on the bed and the notice of her mother's death to one side. It was Harry's diary that she had given him for his birthday and the first entry in the book that she had read, was about a dream he had at the beginning of the school holiday.

*The dream was so real; I was standing on top of an ice cliff, the sea crashing against the base of the cliff the cold air not even touching me but a strong wind was blowing all around. Before me was a bridge made of ice stretching out into the sea and to a city made of ice and snow from what I could tell. Just before I started to walk out onto the bridge a voice called out to me and said "You're not ready yet, but in time you will be. Learn patience for it is a very valuable skill that a up and coming Lord of Light well need." I looked around and standing behind me was an ice statue of a dragon, its wings half spread from its back almost looking like it was getting ready to take flight. Over its*



Thank you to the following reviews:

Hatchetryda, Cycla, athenakitty, uten, gaul, Quills 'N Ink.

I hope you all enjoy this chapter and i hope to hear from you all.

## Chapter 6: Silver Friend

503 BC 1 year

Harry was down in a combat crouch his twin-blade angled so that one blade was resting along his upper arm and the other was inclined to his right hand side. Adinirahc launched an attack with his copper spear while Harry brought his sword up to block the attack and then initiated his own attack.

The training match went like this for over an hour, alternating between attack and defence and Harry managed to block most of Adinirahc attacks but the Dragon Lord managed to get through Harry's defences with his spear all too often. Following the training session both of them cleaned up and then they sat down to dinner and the Dragon Lord studied Harry with a critical eye.

Harry had grown over the year he had been with Adinirahc both physically and mentally. He now was standing a little less than six feet tall and his hair had grown out to fall past his shoulders in length. His eyes were still framed by his glasses but they had been magically changed so that the frames were silver and the lenses were now shatter proof.

He had also had time to think about his life in the future. Voldemort and the war being waged with against him being primary of the things that had gone through his mind. His diary was another thing that he thought of seeing that Tonks would more than likely read it now and discover the secret crush he had on her.

Adinirahc looked over at Harry to see him looking at the old Copper Dragon lying asleep over by the cave entrance. "Harry, you have learned all that I have to show you and I am confident now that you will not embarrass yourself or me in front of any young Lords out there and I think its time for you to leave."

Harry looked at Adinirahc in stunned amazement as the Dragon Lord pulled out an old backpack and some food. "But... but Adinirahc... am I ready to go out there and find some other younger Dragon Lord? I am to serve you for three years! And I thought that you would help me?"

“Yes, I know what was agreed but I know also that you are ready, otherwise I would not be suggesting it now. After sunrise I would like you to be gone and begin your search for the one friend in this war that you will need.”

“But why is it that I have to go now? You said that it would take three years to train me and only one year has passed.” Harry said watching the old man as he moved to take a seat next to the old Copper Dragon.

“Harry, I won’t last another year. Lighting here is dieing and a Dragon Lord does not... can not... live long after his dragon dies. I have already taught you everything you need to know to start looking for another Dragon Lord and you will learn the rest with time.” Adinirahc replied looking up at his dragon companion, a sad smile on his face. “I’m sure you have heard this before, Harry, but remember death is the next big adventure and I’ll see you on that road in time, my friend.”

Harry nodded and watched the old man and elderly dragon for a few minutes, absorbing the warmth of their bonding that was obvious in the closeness of the pair. Finally, finding himself almost choking on his sorrow that he was to lose this man who had been taskmaster, teacher and above all a friend over the last year, he retired to his bed.

The next morning saw Harry up with the sunrise sitting at the cave mouth, waiting. As the first brilliant rays of the sun rose above the trees he heard Adinirahc walk behind him and for a brief second he felt the old mans strong right hand rest on his shoulder. Without uttering a word the Dragon Lord placed the battered backpack stuffed with seven days worth of food beside him and re entered the cave.

As the sun rose steadily Harry sighed, thinking back over the last year. It had been hard work learning from Adinirahc. The first month of training had been mostly working his body to build up muscle and stamina and enable him to handle the large two-headed sword he was using. After the development of his physical strength the Dragon Lord had deemed him to be ready for the main training. Adinirachc had shown him how to control his mind, developing clarity of thought, the ability to better focus and even how to shield his thoughts against

intrusion and attack from another person. It was a skill that would later prove useful against Voldemort he was certain.

With a quiet sigh Harry looked at the backpack at his side and then, as the sun rose above the forest line he gathered his things and left the cave and his teacher behind. He knew that he would never return to this place.

[illegible]

502 BC (1 year)

The year that passed as Harry walked all over England was long and fraught with dangers. He ate by offering his powers and services as a mercenary amid the local people, careful to stay away from the offers involving assassinations as he feared possible effects that might lead to changes in his own time. Nor did he accept the amorous offers of the women of the local taverns, remaining loyal to his love that he now realised he had for Tonks far in the future. He knew that he would tell her the moment he got back to his own time, no matter what she said he knew that he would accept her decision. Through all of his travels he was careful to keep an eye open for any sign that a young Dragon Lord might be found, but he only ever found old men and their beasts who would not go with him.

Harry was in a forest where his home with the Dudley's would be build in the future, seeking some sign of the dragon the local villagers claimed lived within the forest. A sound, like distant muted thunder brought to mind the memories of the old Copper Dragon, a dragon sigh. Harry walked slowly forward to the clearing where the noise with coming from.

Walking into the clearing Harry paused on seeing a huge silver dragon lying in the patch of sunlight that filled the centre of the clearing. It was a massive beast and unlike the Copper Dragon this Silver had no spines running down its back, marking it as a female and its eyes were solid white. Harry paused, realising that the beast was blind and noted that the scales were more white than silver.

"You are a Ilhar. A very old Ilhar. Where is your friend and rider?" Harry asked, schooling his voice into formal politeness when speaking to a dragon and using the word for mother in the dragon tongue.

"Who's there? Answer me!" The dragon said trying to lift its head high and managing to lift it sufficiently to show an egg nestled next to her head on the far side from Harry.

"I'm sorry for disturbing your rest, venerable Ilhar. I heard your sigh and came to see if you were all right. My name is Harry Potter and I was trained by Adinirahc of the last of the Coppers to respect Dragon kind. May I be graced with your name, Ancient One?" Harry said bowing his head to the blind dragon before him.

"My name... I have no name." It sighed deeply, sorrowfully. "I have had no name since my rider and friend died over a winter ago. What of you, Harry? It is pleasing that one who sounds so young has learned good manners. Where is your dragon and friend?"

"Mother, I have no Dragon. I have been seeking a young Dragon Lord to help in a war for over four seasons now. If you are willing then I will be honoured to linger here and sit your death watch with you?" Harry said, walking over to the dragon and after bowing respectfully he placed a hand on its snout while looking into its blind eyes.

"That would be nice to have someone here for my final hour, but my egg..." The dragon tried to lift its head again and turned to gently nuzzle the egg. "My daughter needs another seven sunsets before the hatching. I have but hours left... I ask you, young human, who speaks with respect to one so old and close to death, to look after my last child. Become her friend and ride her for I foresee that your future will be hard and long in coming."

Harry looked at the egg in shock, his mind stumbling over the dragons offer. Could he take a Dragon himself? Would he dare to presume that he was good enough to have one of these great and noble creatures as a life companion?

He saw that it was indeed a silver egg nestling beside the dragon and he knew that some dragons could and would lay different coloured

eggs to their own colour. "I... I am most honoured that you would consider me fit to be companion to your daughter. Noble Ilhar, I swear to you that I will look after your child and that she will know that her mother did not die alone. She will know that you died with someone here to watch over your passing and honour you."

The silver dragon nodded its head and once again that rumbling sigh sounded then she lowered her head to the forest floor and closed her eyes to wait for her last breath.

"Venerable One?"

"Yes, child who will be my daughter's friend?" the dragon's voice was a whisper, soft as a summer breeze.

"Would you know where I might find a young Dragon Lord who might agree to accompany me?"

A rumble, not a sigh this time, but tinged with dragon mirth sounded through the clearing. "Child, there is but one Dragon Lord who is not well within his dotage at this time."

"There is one who will help me? Where might I find him?"

The dragon inclined her head toward the far side of the clearing where a small pool of water from an underground spring had formed. "You have been trained by a Dragon Lord. Go thence to the pool and open your mind. My magic will show to you the face of the young Lord who will aid you in your quest."

Harry almost ran to the edge of the pool, his heart beating fast and hard at this chance to at last find some clue as to the location of the Dragon Lord who would offer to assist him. Kneeling down at the edge of the pool he stared eagerly into its depths, at the gravel base of the pool and waited, watching the slight disturbance of the water caused through the water seeping in from the spring that fed it. For long minutes he waited, expecting the water to darken with magic and for that face he expected to see to appear.

"Ilhar? Are you not able to perform your magic? I am sorry. I should not have tired you with this."



“Hush child. Do you not see the face mirrored within the water? I assure you that he is there. Open you eyes and open your mind, Dragon Lord.”

*“...Open you eyes and open your mind, Dragon Lord.”*

Harry stared into the pool, eyes slowly widening. There was a face within the pool, the face of a young man with an un kept face, badly needing a shave and unruly dark hair and eyes as big as saucers.

*“...Open you eyes and open your mind, Dragon Lord.”*

“Ilhar... Ilhar... I am not... not a Drag... Dragon Lo... Lord. I am not!”

A deep rumbling chuckle filled the clearing. “Thinkest thou I would give my unborn daughter to anyone less than a Dragon Lord?”

Harry turned slowly from the pool, walking back to the great beast and settled himself at her side to touch the dragon’s snout. “Ilhar. I am... unworthy of the title.”

“Then become worthy of it. My daughter, even unborn, deserves the best and you will become the best.” The voice of the dragon was filled with power as she gently nocked her nose against the young mans chest. “You will accept what you are and you will accept it with grace.”

“Yes, Ilhar.” A whisper, being chastised by a dragon was not the most pleasant experience Harry had endured. “I will become worthy of your daughter and of the title.”

“Good. Now scratch my chin, there’s a dear. I have the most frightful itch.”

For a time Harry sat with the dragon, gently rubbing at her chin and listening to her purr at the attention. She sounded remarkably like an overgrown cat, he reflected, rubbing just below one nostril. After a time the dragon stirred, moving to nuzzle the egg closer to Harry and the deepest sigh he had heard from her yet sounded.

“It is time. You must remember your promise, Dragon Lord. Remember always who you are and be worthy of the title. Guard my daughter well and there will come a time when she will in turn guard you.” The great head lowered and touched him lightly on the head, a benediction. “You are the last of the Dragon Lords as she will be the last of the Great Dragons. Make us all proud.”

A whispered sigh, deep and long and Harry knew it to be the last breath leaving the ancient body. For a long time he sat there, between the dead dragon and the living egg before he heaved himself to his feet and recited the words that only a Great Dragon or a Dragon Lord would understand. The ancient lament that marked the passing of a Great Dragon resounded through the clearing in a strong and clear voice, the Death March of dragonkin uttered with all the respect and reverence only a true Dragon Lord could give.

After the last words faded on the wind Harry drew a deep breath and looked at the egg then at the large body of the silver dragon. “Well, we will have to move you from here, Little One, and then I had better get to hunting. You will eat far more than I have with me. The magic binding your mother’s body to this place will take her away soon and her spirit is already with her friend and companion. ”

Harry searched the surrounding forest for over an hour before he found a cave suitable for the raising of a dragonet. The cave would be sited next to where the park would be back in his time and had good water while still being within the shelter of the forest.

After moving the egg, using a levitation charm to make life much easier, into the cave and then catching some rabbits and other small animals around the area Harry sat back to watch the egg. He set a fire and roasted a rabbit for his supper and then sat back, absent mindedly running a finger over the chain to Tonks birthday present.

'I wonder what is Tonks doing right now?' Harry thought.

[illegible]

08 August 1996 8:00 AM A.D (2 hours after Harry departs)

Tonks was at that moment standing in front of Dumbledore in her standard robes and wearing the face she normally wore in public.

Dumbledore was, to say the least, upset about Harry's disappearance over two hours ago, not to mention the recent attack "Well, Tonks. Where is he... or should I say, when is he?"

Tonks kept her eyes on her feet and did not answer his question. She even shored up her mind shields in an effort to slow down Dumbledore reading her mind.

“Tonks. I want you to go back there and wait for him to come back or for you to work out when it is that he is. Understand?” Dumbledore said after a brief attempt at breaking her mind shield and feeling the strength she had put into the shield. ‘Good. She must have gotten stronger from Harry’s training.’ Dumbledore thought.

Tonks nodded, not daring to speak and walked out of the room and directly to the fireplace in the living room of Number Twelve, Grimmauld place and with a wave and quick smile good-bye to Mrs Weasley left for Harry's room to wait for him to get back.

“Another five hours to go.” Tonks said softly to herself after arriving back in Harry’s living room. She glanced down and saw the two diary’s on the low table. One was Harry’s and the other had belonged to the Copper Dragon rider. “Only five hours. If his notes are right.” Looking at the note of how long this spell would last pencilled on a piece of paper she had found in the diary.

Tonks settled in a chair and looked through the diary some more before turning to the last entry and gave a soft sigh and smile. "Do you mean it, Harry or is it just a crush?" she asked looking at Harry's neat handwriting and the four letters at the bottom of the page that warmed her heart.

## ‘Love’

[illegible]

503 BC (7 days)

Harry was sitting next to the almost ready to hatch egg, watching the silver egg with anxious eyes. He had never had to feed a wyrmling before and he was nervous. He hoped that he had build up enough meat for the fledgling when it hatched for at least three days but he was rather worried that he might have underestimated the beasts appetite. Just then the egg gave a heave to the left before started to wobble from left to right.

With a nervous squeak Harry quickly garbed some of the rabbits he had killed over the fast few days and placed them next to the rocking egg. He waited tense, hands out and ready to steady the egg if it looked to be ready to topple over completely.

All at once the top of the egg cracked and opened to show a small silver head capped with two tiny horns. It wavered around for a few seconds and then bright blue eyes looked directly at Harry and with a high pitched cry of hunger the Wyrmling dragon lunged to the left, directly at the rabbits. Dragonet and egg toppled to the ground where the rest of the eggshell shattered to free the small silver body covered in the membrane. Small wings were folded close to the body and trapped by the membrane and the tail that broke free of its confinement was as long as the body it's self. In an instant Harry found himself in the cave with a creature that was eight feet long from snout to tail tip and it creeled as it descended on the rabbits ravenously.

The wyrmling was tearing at the rabbits and Harry took the opportunity to use his knife to cut away the membrane trapping the creature and freeing it entirely from its birthing shell. Hastily he moved the shattered egg and refuse from the birth away from the wyrmling and by the time he was done it had eaten two of the rabbits and was starting on the third.

"Well, I would say with an appetite like that you have to be in good health and in good shape but I guess the next thing is to decide what to call you, my friend."

At the sound of his voice the small silver dragon looked up from its first meal, blood and bits of fur hanging from its snout and locked

eyes with Harry for a moment before it burped then returned to its meal.

Harry sniggered, wondering how long it was going to take to teach the creature some table manners and watched the Wyrmling with indulgent delight as it devoured five of the rabbits before it reared up to its hind legs, rocked the cave with a thunderous burp and collapsed. Harry blinked in astonishment and hurried over to the dragon, poking it gently, worried until a weazy, quivering snore echoed in the cave.

“Right. Table manners have to be high on the priority list. I should call you glutton, but somehow I think

Silvenestri is more suited to you. I don't know why that name sounds so right for you or why I thought of it, but I have a felling I need to call you that." Harry said still looking at his new friend.

Through the long night Harry sat vigil over the dragon, watching her sleep, wondering what he should do. If her appetite continued as it had at her hatching he was going to run out of food very quickly. With the first hint of dawns light on the horizon, he started awake from a doze at the sound of movement near him and he found himself looking at a very awake and aware pair of blue eyes. The dragon was staring at him.

[illegible]

I would like to thank the following reviewers:

**Kessanch** Yes I did borrow Death from Mort, **athenakitty** Harry might have another talk with Death you never know, **Hatchetryda** I'm only human but I am trying to make the chapters longer I swear, **Danny boy** I'm glade you liked it, **Cycla** yes I had to leave you on a cliff hanger because I'm evil, **Sky** glade you liked it, **uten** you'll have to read and find out won't you, **mjk306** was this soon enough?, **David M. Potter** I hope you keep liking it, **Lonely Magician** I'm glad your enjoying it and **elvengoddess696** thank you and I'm glad you liked it.

To everyone who has read this do review and let me know what you think after all I would like to know what you like and dislike.

## Chapter 7: The path of the dragon.

Parseltongue

Telepathic

501 BC (2 Year)

Harry was sitting at the mouth to the cave he had called home for the past two years and across from him was Silvenestri who had grown another four to five feet over the passing years. She was sunning herself on a large flat rock just outside the entrance to the cave.

After looking at her for a moment and admiring the sunlight glinting off her new scales Harry walked back into the cave and started to gather the silver scales she had shed last night. The scales were no bigger than Harry's thumb and grading down to the size of his little finger nail but each scale was very hard to the touch.

After gathering together all of the scales Harry entered the smaller cave to one side of main cavern. Over the intervening years since the dragon's birth he had set up in this small cave the makings of a blacksmith's shop. He checked the forge carefully, using the bellows to bring the coals to full heat. It took a great deal of heat to melt dragon scales, even the scales from so young a dragon.

Harry grabbed one of the smoulder pots and placed it into the fire, allowing it to heat and began to add the scales a few at a time. Watching the scales begin to glow from the heat and gradually melt Harry smiled, thinking how well his friend was growing. He looked over to the wall where he hung the long threads of silver he had made over the last year. It had not been easy at first to get the combination of heat and magic just right to produce the perfect thickness of the strands but he was quite proficient now.

"Well, with this last shedding of scales that should be enough for me to make the cloak." Harry said as the sound of clawed feet scrabbling on stone echoed within the cave.

Harry turned to see Silvenestri standing at the entrance to the smithing cave. What are you doing here? I thought you were still enjoying the sun, Silvenestri. Is there something wrong? Harry asked

in Parseltongue knowing that it would be at least another year before Silvenstri would be able to understand English but looking forward to being able to speak with her in English. He still felt uneasy using parseltongue.

Sun gone so I see what my friend was doing. Silvenestri replied while trying to manoeuvre her bulk through the hole into the cave but her wings stopped her from entering, her efforts threatening to wedge her in the opening.

Harry walked over to Silvenestri and started to rub her eye ridges, calming her. How many times do I have to tell you to call me Harry? I am getting some things ready to make a cloak. Harry said while with one hand he was patting Silvenestri and keeping her settled and with the other he waved his hand and fingers in a complicated pattern. The scales had melted in the crucible and using his magic he shaped the melted silver into the delicate hair thin threads he needed. With a deft stroke of his fingers and sway of his hand he directed the threads to hang with the other threads carefully arrayed so as not to tangle at the far wall.

Silvenestri looked at the silver threads then at Harry Why do you need the silver thread, Fri ... Harry? She asked backing up a step so that her wings would not be damaged.

It's all part of the cloak I am going to make. Now that I have all of the silver all I have to do is get the wool and silk and then I'll have a new cloak to wear. Harry replied and after backing Silvanestri up enough to slip past her he walked out into the main cave.

Everything he needed for a hunt was quickly gathered together and he left with Silvenestri gambling not far behind. Her bouncing around and sniffing into every cluster of bushes reminded him of a dog being let out for a walk, not a dragon on the hunt. It was endearing watching the large silver creature go into raptures over a butterfly trying to escape being inhaled by the curious dragon and he decided he would miss her innocence when she matured. Over the next year she would grow quickly, both in size and in intelligence.

[illegible]



08 August 1996 10:30 AM A.D

Tonks was sitting on Harry's bed her arms warped around her knees and her head resting on top of her arms while looking at the place Harry had been standing when he had left over five hours ago. "Not long now." Tonks said to the room, missing how she and Harry had flirted. It was nice remembering how she had flirted with Harry and how he had begun to flirt back. It was something to kill the time.

Just then the sound of the floo working was heard from the living room and with a sigh Tonks looked to the door to see who had shown up. She did not feel like moving and waited in silence. After a moment Mrs Weasley stood in the doorway looking back at her.

"Well, Dear. I was told to see how you were doing in finding out when Harry had gone in time but I see that all you have done is sit here waiting as if you think he will come back himself." Molly said walking over to Tonks who had turned her head back to the spot again.

Molly was about to say something more when Tonks spoke "He will be back in less than three hours. I know it."

"And how do you know this?" Molly said seating herself next to Tonks.

With a small sigh Tonks looked at her and then pulled out her wand and summoned the two dairies to her. "Harry told me." Tonks said handing the two books to Molly. "Read the last entry in Harry's diary."

Molly Weasley placed the second book on the bed and leafed through Harry's diary quickly until she reached the last entry in the diary.

Dear Tonks

If you are reading this then I have cast the spell I found in the back of the copper Dragon Lord's diary and am now some where in the past. Don't worry about me. If my research is right then I will return within seven to eight hours. Do feel free to show anyone else the Dragon Lord's diary now. The time spell will have vanished from the last page with the casting of it.

# Love Harry James Potter.

Molly looked up and picked up the second book from the bed and flipped it open, frowning as she stared at the strange writing. She looked at the two books for a moment and then looked up from the dairies and looked at Tonks. "Why didn't you tell Dumbledore about this?" Molly said after putting the books down on the bed.

"I don't know. I just couldn't tell him. I just couldn't" Tonks said lowing her head back down to her knees, a single tear rolling down the side of her face at the thought of not seeing Harry again if anything went wrong, either with the casting of the spell or somewhere back in time.

Molly looked at Tonks for a long moment then getting up she picked up the books and started to walk out of the room but Tonks called out just as she left. "Thanks for checking on me, Mrs Weasley and please, feel free to tell Dumbledore what I've been doing."

Molly nodded and left the house via the floo while Tonks turned her gaze to the clock to see it tick over to 11 o'clock.

"Soon." She whispered.

[illegible]

500 BC (1 Year)

Harry was standing once again outside the cave as he admired Silvenstri. In the year that had passed the dragon had grown, both in size and intelligence and at this time was in the air flying back and forth stretching her wings and building the muscles needed to keep her in the air. This was only her third flight but she never the less was graceful, lacking only stamina to remain long in the air.

Harry was now dressed in black leather pants and vest and a white shirt, his cloak was a silver shimmer draping from his shoulders and down his back to end just above his ankles with a rim of grey runes on the hem. The inside of the cloak was of black silk and was enchanted to enable him to carry his sword in a secret sheath on the left hand side. The right side had many pockets heavily enchanted to

enable them to hold things of many sizes and weights that might be needed at some time without ruining the lines of the cloak or hinting that they existed.

With an indulgent smile as Silvanestri rolled onto her back and snaked her neck and head around playfully and then flipped right side up and swooped over the trees Harry turned and walked back into the cave. He strode through the main cave and into his little black smith shop to run his hands lightly over double blades of the twin scimitar almost ready now for use. He needed only to embellish them with gold and he would be done, the magic already infused within them. With a sigh he turned to the forge and the two crucibles almost glowing with the heat emanating from the forge. The first contained the gold he would use to complete the decoration of his weapon and the second held the left over silver he would use to begin work on his armour.

Harry had just started to put the finishing touches on the sword with the gold when Silvenestri managed to work her head into the workshop. Her voice sounded like that of a teenage girl as she spoke to him in flawless English. "Harry come out and play. Come fly with me on my back. I want you to feel the wind on your face with me and to feel what it is like to fly."

Harry chuckled, looking over to Silvenestri and inclined his head to the sword under his hands. "Let me finish this and then we will go and fly for a while, ok?"

Silvenestri nodded and then lowered her head to the floor between the workshop and her room of the cave, her nostrils and snout just within the workshop. She stared at Harry, from the dimness of the cave her eyes gleamed like pale blue jewels while she watched Harry go back to work humming a tune he had heard back in his time.

"You won't be long will you?"

"Not if I am left in peace to work." Harry replied, already knowing that she planned to annoy him until he gave in.

To an accompaniment of sighs, snorts and dragon pouts Harry focused his attention on the work before him, ignoring the dragons

every attempt to get him out and into the air before he had completed his task. Briefly he wondered if he had ever behaved like this impatient adorable creature and winced at the thought. Maybe he had been impatient but he had certainly never had the saving grace of being adorable.

Harry had just finished putting the last of the gold on the hilt of his new weapon and uttered a cooling charm to set his work when a feeling of fear swept over him. Looking out of his workshop Harry saw Silvenestri walking backwards from the cave mouth and deeper into the main cave, her tail lashing around to the front of her for protection as she backed up to the rear of the cave. He sucked in a deep breath of anger at the tall form that was silhouette there. He had hoped not to have such a confrontation until Silvenestri had grown a bit more.

The man before him, threatening his dragon, was carrying a large axe and wearing armour made from the hides of the six prime dragons or as Harry knew them, the greater dragon Red, Blue, Black, Silver, Copper and Brass. The man's axe was a huge two-handed weapon. The axe blades were made from what Harry recognised as the great canine teeth of a dragon, shaped to balance the great axe. The man's face was hidden by the full helmet he wore only his eyes would be visible through the visor slit and crafted from the scales of a blue dragon. His backpack was adorned with skinning tools strapped to its sides and protruding out of the top of it. The tools were crude but effective devices, no care being taken on cleaning or maintenance other than to sharpen them and ensure they were effective at the task he set them to.

With cold dread and simmering rage Harry recognised the man for what he was. Dragon Hunter.

Stay there, Silvenestri! Keep away from him. I'll deal with this man. Harry spoke directly to his dragons mind, using the ability he had rarely used to talk with Silvenestri. He had mainly spoken to her aloud, needing to hear the sound of voices as it had been so long since he had had company other than the wyrmling.

Be careful, my Harry. This man smells of death. Silvenestri said back and then back up as far as the cave would allow her, lashing her tail

around violently to keep the man away from her. She bared her teeth at the armoured man and hissed at him in anger, trying to hide the fear she felt.

The man had by then walked past Harry's workshop and had not taken his eyes from the young dragon. Harry glared but grinned at this negligence, using that mans preoccupation with his dragon to his advantage.

His eyes were glued to Silvenestri and the helmet made his voice sound hard and colder. He grunted as he stalked closer to the gleaming creature. "Only a baby. Hmmm ... Ah, well an easy kill and easy money in my pocket." He sneered walking slowly toward Silvenestri thinking that this one's rider must be out of the cave, possibly hunting. All the better as he would not need to kill another old fool this day.

Harry grabbed his cloak and put it on quickly in a swirl of silver and then pulled the hooded up to conceal his face. Taking a deep breath he walked out behind the hunter with out trying to hide and coughed gently. "Something I can do for you sir?" Harry said holding his new weapon to his side and concealed in the folds of the cloak, ready for anything this man might do. His free hand was tracing a rune under his cloak to give him the advantage of extra speed and strength to fight this hunter. He was not going to take chances with the life of his dragon on the line.

With a grunt of surprise the man spun around his axe slipping from his shoulder to the ready position, eyes narrowed to see Harry standing just out of his range, his cloaks hood hiding his face. For a moment time seemed to freeze as they glared at each other. The man looked Harry up and down and then lunged forward into an attack his axe coming in high and fast as he determined to take out this old fool and claim that flashy shimmering cloak for himself.

Harry fell back a step to get himself out from under the swing of the axe, his free hand tracing another rune, this one in mid air and in plain sight of his attacker. A bolt of lighting flashed from the glowing rune and streaked toward its target. Harry heard the hunter grunt in pain but knew from the glow that emitted from the helmet and the

section of armour that had once belonged to a blue dragon that the magic had been at least partially turned by the draconic magic of those scales.

Harry cursed silently having hoped that the hunter had destroyed that quality of the scales when crafting his armour and pulled back to the cave mouth. With a swirl of the cloak to cover the movement he used to draw his weapon he arced the sword around to follow the line of the cloak. As the folds of the cloak fell away the hunter had only an instant to see the blade before it hit the man on the side of the helmet. It was not a blow designed to kill but to enrage and humiliate his target, to draw this Dragon Hunter away from Silvenestri. Harry grinned at the hunter, settling into a fighting stance, his twin-bladed scimitars at the ready as the man attack again, backing carefully toward the main entrance of the cave.

The Hunter, seeing Harry fall back continued the attack, leaping forward with his axe swinging. He had fought other Dragon Lords and it had taken no effort to defeat them. They were old and no doubt in their prime they had been terrifying fighters to face but in their old age they were easy enough to defeat, weakened by age and their dragons were useless to defend them. He had faced this ones like before and he knew how to fight them.

Harry had backed out of the cave and was now blocking the great swings of the axe, turning aside all the attacks this Hunter threw at him. He felt as though his arms would break at each blow that he blocked but he would not permit this hunter to touch his dragon and the man could not swing so wildly forever. He need only last until the man paused and then he could get through his attacks. The problem with using the axe was that it was a great offensive weapon, but it was woeful as a weapon of defence. He would bide his time.

After a time of watching the huge hunter swing at her rider Silvenestri moved carefully toward the cave mouth. She feared the human but she feared that her friend who fought him would be hurt and she would wait and take whatever chance presented itself to help Harry if she could.

Silvenestri growled softly in her throat as the men danced in homage to approaching death. One would die here this day and she did not want it to be Harry. She roared in protest when the Hunter managed to bring his axe down and Harry mistimed his turn from the blade. The axe rang like a bell as it contacted the swirling cloak protecting Harry's back. The hunter roared in success, thinking he had taken down the dragon rider who unlike all others he had faced had stood against him for more than a few seconds. Harry grunted at the impact and Silvenestri lunged forward and hit the man in the back with her chest. Her head ducking down and her sharp teeth clamping around his arm, gripping the axe and flinging him out of the way so that Harry might have at least a few seconds to recover.

Harry gasped for air, winded, desperate to recover from the blow. Curiously while it hurt it did not hurt so much as he had expected and a quick look over his shoulder enabled him to see that the cloak had blocked most of the blow. There was only a small tear visible in the enchanted material and he thought that maybe his back would be cut but there was little blood and he hoped it was a shallow wound. Sucking air into his lungs he turned to see Silvenestri had pinned the Hunter and had locked her jaw around his right arm stopping the man from any chance of swinging that axe again in attack.

The Hunter looked up into the blue eyes of the creature, noting the shine that brought to mind star light and at the gleaming teeth that held his arm. 'You won't do it.' he thought staring into those jewel eyes and seeing the innocence there. 'You can't do it. You have not killed more than animals for your food and I doubt it is in you to start now.'

Harry by then had clawed his way back to his feet and gotten his breathing under control again. He would not permit his dragon to kill for more than her food when he was there to protect her. He staggered a step or two before he steadied and strode to Silvenestri's side. Thank you, Silver. Thank you for my life. Let him up now and go back in the cave.

Silvenestri growled deep in her throat but nodded her head, giving the hunter a stiff shake before she released him and leaped away, toward the cave before he could recover and strike at her. From the shelter

of the cave the dragon watched as Harry and the Hunter faced off and glared at each other. A quick tensing of muscles and they attacked at the same time.

Back and forth across the clearing in front of the cave they struggled, first axe and then sword staff appearing to have the upper hand. Silvenestri's growls punctuated the fight as she urged her friend on, snorting with fear when it looked as though Harry was in trouble. The crux of the battle came when the axe and sword locked, both weapons seeming to jam together and the men struggled for dominance, each pushing and pulling to free the interlocked weapons. With a snarl the Hunter lunged forward, twisting on the weapons, trying to free his axe head and with a grin Harry released his weapon, turning aside in a fluid movement.

The unexpected move set the Hunter stumbling forward and he staggered, going down to sprawl onto his chest as in the same movement Harry completed his spin, grasped his sword and in a swirl of silver drove the blade into the gap between helmet and armour. With a gurgle the hunter jerked.

The body twitched and with a sigh lay still. Breathing heavily Harry knelt, heaving air into his lungs, trying desperately not to be sick. He had never become used to killing, even in the days when he had been a mercenary he had tried not to kill needlessly and after a moment he had himself under control again. Removing his weapon he wiped the blade carefully clean before he returned to the cave.

Moving into the cave he began packing, using magic to speed the process, wanting desperately to get himself and his dragon away from this area. Where one hunter had come another was sure to follow and he would not expose Silvenestri to danger. He would travel light but he must be certain to take everything that he and the dragon would need.

"Friend Harry?"

"Silvenestri would you wait for me out side, please? I need to get the rest of that silver I melted down and a few things from the forge then we will fly to a new home. "



Silvenestri nodded and slipped out of the cave and waited for Harry. The Dragon shied away from the body of the Hunter, choosing to stand as far from the corpse as she could get and still be close to the cave mouth to wait for her friend. When Harry emerged from the cave he had a backpack slung over one shoulder and a couple of carefully wrapped bundles floating along behind him.

"Where are we going, Friend Harry?" Craning her neck around she watched as Harry mounted her, settling into his place just above the heavy wing muscles and muttering the charm that would enable him to stay mounted without fear of falling.

Harry looked at the cave and the clearing, remembering the days here where for more than three winters he had struggled to feed a voracious wyrmling, where he had felt strangely carefree and content, even though it was a time consuming task to rear a dragon. It had been home. A home he had loved.

He refused to look at the body lying before the cave.

"We go north to where a castle will be built in approximately 1,490 years." Harry whispered.

[illegible]

athenakitty, uten, Danny boy, Cyclo, Silverscale, shadow of the black abyss, Lonely Magician, Kathryn Black, padfootstwin2, lucas13, Moony Lycanthropic, TopQuark, daisy, Egyptian Flame.

## Chapter 8: The Last Gate

Parseltongue

Telepathic

08 August 1996 13:00 PM A.D

Tonks was sitting quietly in the living room her feet tucked under her after having moved from the bedroom to make sure that no one else showed up before Harry returned.

“Any time now.” Tonks said as the clock hit one o’clock. “Any time.”

With a whoosh Dumbledore appeared and stepped out of the fireplace. His eyes sparkled with their normal twinkle and he cast a cleaning charm on himself as he glanced about the room and walked over to join Tonks and settled into one of the chairs next to her.

“Well, I see that he has yet to return.” Dumbledore said after making a cup of tea with a wave of his wand. “You should be interested to learn that we found a suit of chain mail armour in a cave located in the Forbidden Forest. It was found thanks to the use of a locating spell keyed to Harry. Aside from the armour we also located a sword. Two heads to the sword joined at the hilt.”

Tonks considered the information before she looked at Dumbledore and then turned her attention back to the painting she had done of the last Dragon Lord’s symbol. “So why have you come here, Albus?” she said with a bored tone, her eyes remaining fixed on the painting.

“Well for one reason I need to know if you are in love with him and for another...” Dumbledore rummaged in a pocket within his voluptuous robes. “This was also with the armour and it was the only thing we could actually remove from the cave.” Dumbledore showed Tonks a silver cloak brooch that bore the same symbol as the one depicted on the wall.

Tonks dropped her gaze to the brooch with a flash of interest and then it hit her what Dumbledore had said. “What Harry and I do in our private time is our business and of no concern to you or anyone other

than us. Now would you please leave, Albus and keep the items you found in that cave safe until Harry gets back.” Her eyes took on a red tint and her hair flushed a jet black while her teeth grew out into fangs with her anger at Dumbledore’s audacity at trying to poke into her private life.

Dumbledore looked on as Tonks' face changed to one of hate at the man trying to pry into her private life and deciding that discretion was the better part of valour he quickly left the room. Tonks heard the whoosh of flue powder being used and snorted softly, smiling as she reflected that he had not seemed to want to face one upset Auror even if he was one of the best in duelling.

Tonks rose and moved to the fireplace, glaring at the dancing flames and then with a wicked glint in her eye waved her wand and efficiently cut the fireplace from the floo network until Harry got back.

“Any time now and Harry if you don’t come back in one piece I will tear what’s left of you apart and then stitch you together. With a dull needle.”

[illegible]

## 498 BC (2 Years)

Harry was standing at the edge of what would in time become the Forbidden Forest and gazing up at the cliff that Hogwarts would be built upon in the next 1000 or so years as the sun rose above the horizon. Next to him loomed Silvenestri who now stood twice the size of a heavy horse and her horns had grown to be large enough to impale a person on. Her tail was equally as long as her body and curled elegantly around to her left side, the tip twitching in an unconscious dance. Her eyes were still starlight blue and were only now beginning to show the first changes to the mercury colour that would mark her as an adult dragon.

“Its time, my friend. Time to do what I must do before returning. Are you ready?” Harry queried the Silver Dragon standing so still beside him. His face remained unchanged, unmoved by the sight of this

place which would be his first home in the future before Voldemort's second rise to power.

Silvenestri angled her elegant neck to permit her to look upon her friend and spoke in English. Her voice sounded like that of a woman into her twenties more than that of a five-year-old as she was in chronological age. There was perfect clarity to her speech, no distortion of her words despite the limitations of flexibility associated with the shape of her draconic jaw. "I am always ready, my friend. Now then, let us go and do what must be done."

Harry nodded and with the newly risen sunlight glinting off of his silver chain mail and the cloak he wore and with his sword resting within its magical folds he climbed onto Silvenestri's back. With a deep breath to fortify himself he took a firm but gentle hold on the leather harness he had fashioned to fit around her neck and shoulders.

Silvenestri waited until she felt Harry settle into place before turning her head to check that he had grasped the riding straps securely and assured that he was ready she almost hummed her pleasure. She loved nothing better than flying except to fly with her friend. When he gave the okay she gave a single massive upward lung and after a moment of hanging suspended in free air her wings swept down in a powerful stroke and she was air born and flying a circle around the clearing of the future Hogwarts.

Harry looked down upon the rocky ground and the surrounding forest and then contacted the dragon through his mind link with her. "Ok. We go to Londinium and the last gate to the Realm of the Dead, my friend. And then we go home."

Silvenestri nodded her head just enough to let Harry know that she heard him and not enough to effect her flying. Angling her great body and spreading her wings wide she sought out and found the jet stream that would speed her flight toward the distant Roman settlement.

Harry drew a shaky breath as they headed south to Londinium and to the site of the future Ministry of Magic and the place where Sirius had fallen through the cursed gate that terrible night far in the future.

It was sunset when Harry and Silvenestri flew over Londinium. He shook his head at the settlement that was such a far cry from the metropolis that it would be in his time. It still had so much growing to do but here and now there were some small villages nestled outside the main cluster of buildings and streets that made up the town.

Harry requested that Silvenestri circle Londinium and the surrounding area until they were over one of the smallest of the villages and sensing a source of power touch his awareness he told her to land.

Silvenestri grunted an acknowledgment and angled her wings to catch the air to assist in slowing her flight and back winged to land outside of the village. Harry slid from her back and pulled his cloak hood up to hide his face as four of the villagers walked up to them. All four of them had pitchforks raised and ready in case of trouble. He watched them approach, noting the signs of nervousness that could lead to a fight if he or Silvanestri made the slightest move they might construe to be a threat. The leader was a young man not much older than Harry and the other three looked to be a little younger than their leader. All four looked ready to defend their homes, even against the might of a dragon.

“What do you want Lord?” The leader said with careful politeness though his voice quivered a little with fear at the proximity of the great silver creature. He had never been this close to a dragon and this Dragon Lord was not the doddering old man the hunters who passed through the village from time to time spoke of.

Harry looked at the leader and in a calm voice carefully without inflection motioned to the village. “I want nothing from you or your homes. I just want to get to the caves that lie under this village.” After saying this Harry turned to look at Silvenestri. “My dear, you will not fit into the caves as you are I’m afraid. If you would be so kind?”

Silvenestri smiled sweetly at Harry, a terrifying view of draconic fangs for the watching villagers and then her form started to blur and shift. After a moment the dragon was gone and in its place a little girl who appeared no older than 5 winters stood before the watching men. The girl child had silver hair and a soft cream coloured skin with star light coloured eyes and she was dressed in a gown of the finest linen of a

deep green colour that any noble's daughter would be delighted to own.

Harry smiled at the girl and crouch down and held his arms out and open for her as she run into them and threw her arms around his neck. "Right now there is no need for your fellow villagers to be upset with the appearance of a dragon in the neighbourhood. If there is nothing more that you people need then Silvenestri and I have much to do. We have a gate to close."

With that rather cryptic comment Harry and the now human formed Silvenestri walked past the staring villagers and into the woods. It did not take long for Harry to find the cave that he needed, guided by that instinct that drew him to powerful magic.

Drawing a deep breath as he stood at the opening into the cave Harry glanced at Silvanestri before setting her on the ground.

"There will be guardians of course. Are you ready?" he murmured.

"Always."

Harry knew that the easy part of this was the finding of the cave and that the difficult part would be in winning past whatever guardians had been set by the long dead Elves who had created the artefact he was intending to shut down. Barely had they set foot within the cave than something moved within the deep darkness and by concentrating Harry drew on the magical sight granted to him by his link with Silvanestri and the dark interior of the cave became clear in shades of grey.

Moving from alcoves cut into the rock of the cave wall were three armoured forms. Harry could sense the magic surrounding them and knew them to animated suits of armour, Elven crafted and that to proceed he must win past them.

Harry stepped away from his companion, drawing his two bladed sword and drawing the first two of the animated horrors towards him while Silvanestri danced away from him with a child like glee, her much less impressive human teeth bared in the joy of the fight about to take place.

The armour crafted Guardians each stood six feet tall and wielded Elven thin blades, the weapons resembling the more commonly used rapier in times yet to come. One moved to front the dragon child and those attacking Harry did so as a unit, timing every attack to compliment the other, the perfect team designed to combat a single enemy of great skill.

Harry cursed as a hit penetrated his guard but his armour held against the stroke and he was able to parry the second attack and return the hit against his first opponent. His blow took the Guardian in the head and with resounding force. With a metallic screech the helmet separated from the remainder of the body and was sent flying across the entry cave. The armour shuddered and sparks seemed to shed from the joints of the suit before the binding enchantment unravelled and the armour fell over and clanged to the rock floor with a deafening clatter.

Silvenestri had attempted to cast magic against the automaton and had discovered to her disgust that the construct seemed to shed her magic, being totally unaffected by the more powerful of her attempts. The only spell that seemed to have any effect upon the creature was a slowing spell that enabled her to escape from a particularly vicious two-handed strike. With a low and very unchild like curse that her magic was basically useless against the creations and with the cave being too small to take her true draconic form she could only resort to her speed and dexterity, dodging the creature until Harry was free to assist her.

Harry caught a glimpse of Silvenestri falling back from her attacker and realised that his companion was in trouble. With bared teeth he changed his defensive dance to one of offence, attacking in a flurry of blows. His defensive crouch shifted into a sliding forward motion smoothly, sword heads flashing in a quick one two sequence, working the thin blade up higher and higher. At the peak of the move, with the armours mid section exposed he took a half step back and spun the sword overhead and down in a sweep, his every movement designed to increase the momentum of the blade. He tucked an elbow tight to his waist and turned, sweeping the weapon around and with a deafening clang the magically strengthened blade cleaved into the exposed waist of the automaton. Metal screamed and sparks of

magic flew as Harry cleaved the armour in two and the binding enchantment was broken. The broken Guardian clattered to the floor.

Even as he struck the Guardian the killing blow he felt a sudden sharp pain run up his spine and simultaneously Silvenestri cried out in pain. Harry spun in time to see her opponent turning to follow the dancing child, noting the blood that now coated the spiked gauntlet it wore. The thin blade was sweeping overhead toward the child and with a snarl Harry threw himself between Guardian and child.

There was no time to block the blow with his weapon and he took the hit on his armoured left shoulder. He grunted under the force of the blow, his chain mail largely taking the blow but the rings bent and indented into his shoulder. With no time to even consider the possible consequences of injury Harry took a half step back, angling himself and shifting his weapon to angle one head and managed to turn the second blow that would have taken his head from his shoulders. Grunting with the effort he spun away from the Guardian, squaring his stance and setting himself to return the battle. Silvanestri was out of harms way and he needed to set himself up to take this final Guardian down.

With his stance set Harry feinted to the Guardians right, a small smile twitched his lips as the Guardian responded with the expected block at mid height and his teeth bared as he half stepped forward, bringing the right head of his weapon toward the creatures left shoulder. The construct flashed its sword up in a block and Harry dropped his left shoulder down, the left head of his sword smacking solidly into the creature's upper thigh area. The construct staggered and in a flash Harry half turned, dragging the right head of the two-headed sword around to cleave the helmeted head from the construct. With metal screaming and magic wailing as it dissipated the Guardian collapsed in pieces to the floor.

Harry didn't miss a beat as the armour collapsed before him. Flipping the sword to his side in a guard position he spun to find where Silvanestri had gone. The cavern remained empty of monsters and relaxing he hurried to his companion's side. The child was sitting crouched against the cave wall, one hand clutched to her upper right shoulder where the darkness of blood marked the wound. Harry



examined her carefully and sighed softly when it proved to be a shallow wound and not one that should cause her any distress.

With care he cleaned the wound and bound it, lightly stroking her silver tresses when he had finished and then helped her to her feet. "Next time dodge an attack, don't walk straight into it."

Silvenestri looked at Harry and with narrowed eyes poked her tongue at him. "I did dodge you just didn't see it. Now shouldn't we be going?"

Harry nodded and refrained from commenting on her cheekiness and led the way deeper into the cave, leaving three suits of armour lying on the ground and in pieces. This threat was over but there was no guarantee that there were no other guardians placed at the cave to keep out intruders.

They walked for hours through a labyrinth of caves and passageways with Harry in the lead and Silvenestri following close behind him. Harry was using the strengthening level of magic to guide him through the maze and he knew that they must soon come to the Artefact that he wanted. Neither spoke, both concentrating on the many side tunnels they passed half expecting some magically crafted monster set as Guardian to leap at them.

It was almost a surprise to finally emerge into a large chamber where the walls of the cave had been smoothed by hands long gone to dust. Dominating the centre of the cavern was an archway crafted of purple coloured stone and within its framework a black shimmering distortion of light existed.

Harry stared at the arch for a long moment and a small smile stretched his lips. This was what he had sought. This was the gateway that he had to close before he could return to his own time. He stalked toward the gate, his sword still at the ready, expecting to be interrupted at any moment by Guardians but only Silvanestri moved within the cave, following closely behind him.

Harry reached the base of the archway and paused to survey the area. He realised that the area he had walked down to reach this point was a walkway, perhaps a processional. On either side of him

were seats carved into the natural rock from which the archway and the isle could be clearly observed. He scowled as he saw that some of these stone seats had cushions set out within them and when he poked one with his sword he realised that they were new, not something left here in ages past. Completing his survey of the room he noted nothing else of interest and returned again to the isle between the seats.

Silvenestri huffed a small breath, bored at the inactivity. She had expected there to be fighting and perhaps some magical fireworks but there seemed to be no more guardians and why was Harry just standing there, looking around the room? If he did not do something shortly she was just going to have to do something. Maybe... what would happen if she threw a cushion through the gate?

Harry moved to stand before the gate and taking a deep steadying breath he began to chant. Raising his arms before him he flexed his fingers and began to trace an intricate pattern of runes as the words of magic flowed from him. It was time to close this portal to the land of the dead.

With a pout Silvanestri huffed and set the cushion she had picked up back on the seat.

Harry was half way through the casting of the sealing spell when a cry of rage rang through the cave. With a sigh he cast a holding spell to keep the magic he was shaping from dissipating and turned to see the source of the interruption. Three people stood at the entrance to the cave with shapes behind them suggesting more. Seven more, he was sure considering the existence of the ten cushions in the stone seats near him. As he turned to them the three moved into the cave drawing the roman cestus they carried and the leader brandishing his elaborate staff.

Harry noted two things immediately. The first was that Silvanestri was crouched low and using every bit of cover to move around to one side unseen. The second was that the staff the leader carried was crafted of intricately carved silvery coloured wood. He recognised some of those carvings as being Elven Runes of Power.

“How dare you defile this place of sacred and glorious death!” The leader spat his hate at Harry, his fine silk robes catching on a protrudance of stone and tearing with his wild gesturing. “For this you must be punished! In such a foul case of defilement there is only one fate worthy. You will be pushed through this gate and given to the dead as is the punishment for all defilers.”

Harry elegantly arched an eyebrow and shrugged then drew his twin-bladed sword. A concerted gasp came from the group near the cave entrance at sight of that distinctive weapon, as it was generally known that only a Dragon Lord could and would use such a weapon. The younger followers of the cult backed toward the entrance, suddenly uncertain about-facing this single foe. The reputation of the Dragon Lords preceded them and they were reluctant to face one.

“I will give you all this one opportunity to back off and to leave this cave. Never look back. Do this or must you truly go to deaths realm so young in life?”

With barely a moments hesitation three of the younger followers ran from the cave deciding that they did not want to fight the legend that was a Dragon Lord. At this desertion their leader snarled and charged, his staff leading the way and with his example his followers gained fortitude and with weapons at the ready they charged after him.

Harry sighed and with a sidelong glance at Silvanestri where she lurked watching the proceedings he moved a few steps away from the gate and to one side and set himself for the charge. The first wild swing of the staff was effectively blocked and he tucked himself into a roll to gain some additional space away from the gate. As he came out of the roll he spun his weapon in an overhead arc as he came up to his knees and felt the blade connect. The leader of the cult screamed as his knee met metal and went down in a flurry of silk and blood. Harry completed the movement, coming up to his feet once again and half turning to set himself for the hesitating cultists.

You may attack when ready, My Dear Harry said to Silvenestri as he blocked and dodged an incoming attack.

The childish grin of delight turned into the toothy maw of a dragon as Silvenestri blurred into her true form. From girl child to rearing silver

glory in a heartbeat the Dragon surveyed her prey and with a hiss of near pleasure she sucked in a deep lung full of air and breathed a cloud of silver mist at everyone in the room.

Harry wafted a hand in front of his face, lowering the sword as he sighed. About him the seven cultists were crashing to the ground, balance disrupted as they lost control of their limbs. The dragons paralysing breath weapon had covered all those in the room and Harry smiled, knowing that his magical link to Silvanestri made him immune to her breath weapon.

Harry glanced at his companion and noting the draconic smirk he wafted the air in front of his face again. "Remind me to introduce you to peppermints when we go to my time, Dear Heart. And to a thing called tooth paste." Harry walked up to the leader of the group who was lying on the ground, the stump of his leg bleeding profusely onto the stone. "How long will he be paralysed for?"

Silvenestri smiled her toothy grin, quite pleased with herself and showing as many fangs as possible in her pleasure. "Long enough for you to finish what we came for. He'll bleed to death before he can move. Now what are peppermints?" She concentrated a moment and her child like smiling form returned.

Harry coughed softly and hesitated, uncertain quite what to say. "Sweet treats." He decided, certain that he would not need to comment on the context he had intended the mention of peppermints to take. Pulling a rag from a pocket in his cloak he tied a tourniquet around the leader's leg and turned back to the gate. He had work to finish.

"Sweet treats? Interesting. So, what about toothpaste?" the child skipped to the nearest carved seat and settled herself down to watch.

Harry glanced sideways at the dragon and flicked his eyes back to the gate and his waiting task. "Not now, Silvanestri. Later."

It was a complex spell that needed to be cast to shut the gate and it was another half an hour before Harry finished. With the last rune drawn and the final word of power uttered he lifted his eyes to the shimmering darkness in time to see that rippling blackness still to the

appearance of dark glass and then a flood of fine cracks snaked across the surface. With a crack the spider web of lines widened and the glass like surface shattered.

With a satisfied if tired sigh Harry turned to survey the group of people held by Silvenestri's breath weapon. "And now people it is time for me to go. Won't be too long before you can move again so I hope you have a long and happy life and I'll see you in the after life."

Harry took two steps and then noticed the glint of silver. Crouching down he ran his fingers lightly over the Elven Staff and hefted it carefully. "Can't possibly leave something this powerful behind, now can we? It will just have to come with me."

He decided as he held the staff that the most effective means of disposing of the item would be to subject it to the more mature version of Silvenestri's breath weapon but his companion would need time to develop that ability. Until then the staff would need to be secured so that it did not fall into the wrong hands and he knew just the place and spell for that. Offering his arm in a most courtly manner from an era not yet known to these cultists he walked from the cave, Silvenestri's tiny hand resting on his and a far too large smile on her face.

It was midnight before Harry and Silvenestri made their way out of the cave and into a clearing that was large enough for Silvenestri to change back to her draconic form. For a long moment Harry stared up at the shimmering starlight, reflecting that in his own time the stars were never this bright nor the air so clear. There were some things he was going to miss when he returned.

After Silvenestri had changed into her draconic form he magically produced light and carefully checked out her shoulder and wing muscles, concerned that her wound might hamper her flight. Satisfied that the wound was minor and that she would not be further injured by flight Harry climbed onto her back.

Silvanestri looked up at the glittering star field and then arched her neck, looking over her shoulders at Harry. "So, where to now my friend?"

Harry smiled and rubbed gently at the warm scales under his hands. He thought of Tonks and the return home. 'Soon.' He thought before saying. "We return to the forest in the north first and then we will return to my home, my friend. We will go home."

Silvenestri nodded and checking the clearance on either side of her arched wings she lunged upward, her wings catching the all-important downstroke to lift them above the tree line. Arcing into a circle she steadied her flight and took her bearings, heading to the north her large silver wings beating at the air as she gained altitude and sought out any assisting currents that would speed them on their way.

It would be a long flight but a flight by moon and starlight was a pleasure, not a chore and she knew that Harry too enjoyed the beauty of the night. They enjoyed the cool of the night and its beauty and they enjoyed also the glory of the sunrise and the warmth it brought as they crossed over into the lands that in the future would become Scotland.

It took most of the day for Harry and Silvenestri to make their way back to the site where Hogwarts would be built. Silvanestri circled around the area seeking any indication that they were not alone here before landing just outside of the forest. Harry dismounted and after checking Silvenestri's wound to ensure she had not aggravated the wound by the long flight started to walk into the forest when an old man walked out of the forest and casually sauntered up to Harry and Silvenestri.

Silvanestri glared at the stranger, uncertain as she was certain that there had been no one in the area. For his part Harry watched the stranger with narrowed eyes, sensing strong magic at work.

The man was short by the measure of Harry's time, standing about 5' 3" and by his ragged cut snow-white beard and hair Harry judged him to be in his late 60's. He was dressed in ragged robes that had patches roughly sewn all over and for all his ratty appearance his face and hands were clean and the faint smell of herbs clung to him. He walked with the aid of a staff that was slightly taller than his own height and his eyes were a clear blue colour. Meeting that blue gaze

Harry felt immense power and knew that he must be wary of this old one. For all of the power that he sensed though, he felt no threat and indeed felt a reassurance emanating from the man. In some subtle way he was reminded of Dumbledore.

“Well I must say that was a good show you both put on. Your task here is done now and it is time for you two to be on your way. Oh, by the way, have you worked out a means by which you can get Silvenestri to your time?”

Harry looked the man over and Silvanestri uttered a short sharp hiss and attempted to scrunch her draconic form into as small a size as possible to hide behind Harry's slender form. Tilting her head so that one eye turned side on to the old man she wriggled her tail as tightly to her legs as possible, wishing that Harry was not quite so skinny. She was sure the old man could still see her.

“I was going to sleep on it and then see what I could work out tomorrow. Unless you know something that I could do that would enable me to transport her to my time, Old Man?”

The man smiled at Harry showing clean even white teeth while he surveyed the rocks lining the clearing and chose one, taking a seat as he surveyed the hiding dragon. With a shake of his head and gentle amused smile he considered Harry with his blue eyes glinting mischief.

“Well, the only way that I know off hand is to make a deal with Death. In fact I think that's the only way it could be done. Never the less you can not stay here any longer.”

As the old man had talked Silvanestri had seemed to gain more confidence and she slipped from behind Harry to settle at his side. Harry looked for a long moment at the man and then looked to Silvenestri who had taken a pose next to him much like that of the Sphinx of Egypt. Now she lowered her head and rested it close to Harry, her blue silver eyes begging for her eye ridges to be rubbed.

“Well, if it is a deal with Death that must be done then so be it. My time is limited, as you say and I will not leave her. We'll be going now, Old Man. May your years be long and prosperous.”

Just as Harry took the first step the old man spoke. "I am sorry but the items you so carefully made must remain here and that includes the Elven Staff that you liberated from the hands of the cultists. I can assure you that I will ensure that no one will be able to access them until very close to your time. You will need them then and they will be waiting for you."

"Who are you?" Harry glared at the old man, suspicious.

"No one of any importance. I am merely here to assist your way in ensuring that what needs to be done, is done. After all, I am the most powerful wizard the world will ever see."

Harry stared for a long moment, finally nodding his agreement. Magic fairly radiated from the old one and the feeling that he should be trusted would not go away. With a sigh he started to unstrap the armour and remove it along with the cloak and his weapon. Stripped down to ordinary tunic and breeches he handed the items over. "I am trusting you to make sure that I get the cloak first, before the other items."

The man nodded once, decisively, and placed the cloak to one side apart from Harry's armour and weapon. "I will see to it. All must be done in order for they're to be success, young Dragon Lord. Now it is time for you both to go." He smiled at Harry and Silvenestri as a purple mist started to gather around them.

Harry nodded and sighed looking about him as the purple smoke gathered. Just as he vanished into the cloud of smoke with Silvenestri beside him he looked at the old man. "My friend and I will be back when I am needed most."

The old man sighed after both had vanished and the mist had faded and looked at the rock beside which Harry had been standing. He smiled as he noted the words the magic had carved into the stone. Harry's parting comment was forever engraved in highland granite, awaiting the arrival of the founders of an academy as yet not even a dream.

"You have my best wishes Harry James Potter."



With a quiet sigh the old man who would in later days be given the name Merlin in books of history and romance walked back into the forest. Harry's carefully created items floated along obediently behind him as he made his way into the cave where he would secure the armour and weapon for Dumbledore to find in the future and to craft a safe magic to contain and protect the staff until Harry was ready.

"All happens in good time." He whispered, a small smile on his face.

[illegible]

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I hope you all liked this one and next time around I'll say this much  
Number 4 well never be the same again or more to the point the  
Headmaster wont be.

## Chapter 9: Home

/Telepathic/

Deaths realm

Harry and Silvenestri found themselves in the midst of the black and purple mist that marked the realm of the dead. Harry looked around searching for a landmark that he might recognise or for Death himself moving in the mist. Silvanestri peered about her with wide and wondering eyes.

“I wonder if he would like it that I dropped in again or if he might not be too pleased to see me?” Harry mused to himself while peering into the mist. “How the devil are you supposed to find anything in this mist?”

He was uncertain about time in this place and how much might have passed before the sound of horses hooves come from somewhere behind them. Tuning around to peer into the mist he winced as the hooves seemed to come, once again from behind him and he turned, searching for the source of the sound. Mist swirled around them and from within its dark depths something lighter moved and gradually the white horse he knew as Binky emerged from the mist and walked over to Harry and Silvenestri. Seated astride his back was Death who once again was draped from head to toe in black robes and cloak.

Harry looked up at Death expectantly as he approached and he could feel the weight of that strange gaze on him and his companion. Silvanestri moved uncomfortably beside him but she remained silent and did not flinch when Death dismounted and stood in front of them.

**“Well, Mr Potter. What are you doing here this time?”** Death said in that rich but cold voice of his the blue glow from his eyes seemed to suggest amusement at this return visit of Harry’s. To Harry it did not seem that Death was at all surprised to see him.

Harry knew that in the face of Death he must be careful but he must be true to himself. Death could be a prickly fellow and he had his own views on reality and morality that were unique to a creature that reaped souls.

"I am here to make a deal." Moving himself to stand before Silvenestri protectively while also thinking if what he was about to offer might possibly be enough to get Silvenestri into his time.

Death looked at Harry for a long moment and eventually gave a short, sharp nod. **"Very well, Mr Potter. What is it that you offer Harry? I take it you want your friend here, the lovely Silvenestri to accompany you to your time? You do realise, do you not that it simply is not done? There are rules that even I must obey. Your companion, should she go forward would be and yet not be a few thousand years old. What are you offering that might convince me to permit this thing from happening?"**

Harry drew in a deep breath, well aware that what he was promising would not be so easy to accomplish. "I'll close the portal under the Ministry of Magic for you if in return you will ensure that Silvenestri gets safely to my time. Deal?" Harry said glancing up at Death and looking him right in those blue glowing eye sockets.

Death raised a bony hand to rest on his jaw as he thought on this, he admitted somewhat unexpected offer, his eyes never leaving Harry's face. The gate beneath the Ministry of Magic he considered to be a personal affront and one that had annoyed him for some time, which considering his age through the ages was rather a long time. He personally loved the paradox of time.

**"Very well, Mr Potter. Deal but I make one condition myself. You will seal the portal and you will do so within one week of your return. Do this and I will send Silvenestri to the woods out side your home of Little Whinging. Remember that I give you one week or Silvenestri will be returned to her own time line."**

Harry nodded once, accepting the conditional. He knew that Death might well have refused his offer or placed some other much more unpalatable condition on the task. This seemed more than fair. At his agreement Death raised again his skeletal hand and Silvenestri vanished, seeming to become a part of the mist. Harry felt Deaths burning eyes on him as the mists began to swirl thickly around him and he knew that he was moving through time. Faintly, mixed and

blended to be a part of the mist itself he could hear that rich and chilling voice.

“Did you recall our last conversation, Mr Potter? Did you recall that the physical form has a memory of what it should be or did you forget? You are, after all merely a teenager Harry and in many ways your body has much more innocence than your mind. It remembers and seeks to return to its appropriate place in time and space, but have no fear, you will at least remember all that you learned.”

[illegible]

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"It must be soon. He'll return soon."

Tonks was seated in the living room of Harry's suite of rooms magically placed within the bedroom at Privet Drive when the sound of a thud and a grunt came from Harry's bedroom. Tonks was on her feet in a flash and running into Harry's room to see Harry slowly getting to his feet and staring at first his arms and then legs, turning his hands over and over and shaking his head slowly as though in disbelief.

“Harry!” Tonks almost screamed and jumped Harry, giving him a large hug and a kiss on the cheek. She never saw the somewhat dazed but definitely pleased look that crossed Harry’s face before she brought her hand around and slapped him across the face. “Where the hell you been?” she yelled after letting him climb back to his feet, her hands on her hips as she glared at him, awaiting his answer.

Harry blinked away the shock of such a contradictory greeting and with a much more careful smile he returned the hug while rubbing his red cheek and then completed looking him self over. The fading voice of Death returned to him and sighed as he understood Deaths warning and amusement.

He was sixteen.

'Damn. I am going to have to re train my body. I'm no longer twenty two.' Looking up at Tonks Harry could see the concern for him in her eyes and the worry his trip had caused her. "I'm fine Tonks. Really. Just a little tired from... well, it's hard to describe, but I can't rest yet. I have to meet a friend of mine before any problems might arise. Care to join me?" He said to her putting one arm around her shoulders and giving her a small smile, hoping that for now she would accept this. He really had to find Silvanestri before the dragon panicked or was discovered.

Tonks nodded and followed Harry out of the room knowing only too well that determined look in his eyes. "Fine, but you had better tell me what you did while you were gone or I will hex you into next week."

She made no move to remove Harry's arm from around her shoulders, finding it rather nice to have that weight there. It had seemed to be so long since he had left and really it had not been long at all. Merely a few hours but that weight was reassuring and produced a rather nice warm glow deep inside.

'Rather nice to have that arm there.' She thought.

"Where are we going, Harry?" Tonks said after they left the buildings behind and entered the woods.

Harry had been silent, looking around him as they had left the houses behind as though he was only too happy to be in the open air. Harry glanced at her and smiled as he moved a little ahead of her his hands pushing braches out of the way and holding them long enough for Tonks to walk through before releasing them and moving ahead of her again.

"It's just up ahead, Tonks. Trust me." Harry said, leading the way through a thicket of thorn bushes and he smiled when he saw his destination. He motioned ahead to show her the old cave where he had lived for three years. "Here we are. Just wait here please and I'll just get my friend."

Harry gave Tonks a reassuring smile and walked over to the cave mouth, pleased when Tonks trusted him enough to wait as he had asked. He knew that she must have been burning with questions but

she had not snowballed him with an avalanche of demands that he explain but how much longer that would last he was uncertain. Certainly she was going to want some explanations when she saw his 'friend'.

Approaching the cave he calmed his thoughts and reached out with his mind, calling out to Silvenestri. He could only trust that Death had kept his word. /My Dear. You can come out now. I have brought a friend to meet you./

From deep within the cave there was a rustle of movement and then Silvenestri was there. In her human form she walked out of the cave and hurried up to Harry who picked her up and held her close. The dragon gone human buried her head into his shoulder shyly. At his encouraging murmur Silvenestri looked up from Harry's shoulder and at Tonks who's hair was at this moment a bright pink and the dragon child gave a small chuckle then turned to Harry.

"Don't leave me alone like that again Harry." She admonished him in a small hard voice, then she looked back over to Tonks and gave a small little girl shy smile.

Tonks looked in stunned surprise at the little girl with her silver hair and star blue eyes. A child? Where had Harry gotten a child and what had she been doing in a cave? It made no sense. "So, who is this Harry? Some competition for your heart maybe, or some one else?"

She was thinking furiously about what possible effects might be generated by that spell. For all she knew this child was his daughter from where ever; when ever he might have gone. Harry certainly did not look old enough to be her father but who knew what effects that time spell might have had? Just how long was Harry gone for Harry? Hours for her but for him...?

Harry smiled at Silvanestri and positively beamed at Tonks and after putting Silvenestri down he walked over to Tonks and gently but quite firmly hugged her. "No competition. I'll settle for the only woman in this clearing but you will have to share me with Silvenestri, Tonks, for my little dragon here can be quite demanding sometimes." Harry finished with a smile down at the little girl and then reached out and

messed up her hair a little smiling at the hard look the little dragon child gave him for his affront to her draconic dignity.

Tonks looked at the little girl with a smile and after a moment she crouch down to her level. "Hello, Silvenestri. My name is Tonks and I am very pleased to meet you. How old are you and could you tell me where you're mum and dad are?" She said, tilting her head slightly so that her hair hid her slightly pink cheeks at what Harry had said. She was also highly amused and could not hide the chuckle at the look Silvenestri was giving Harry for messing up her hair.

Silvenestri looked Tonks in the eye and after a moment began to sort out the mess Harry had made of her hair as though he had unforgivably made her unpresentable in public. Quite clearly and calmly she spoke to this odd pink haired woman who she was certain she was going to have to learn to like whether she wanted to or not. Clearly Harry thought a great deal of her.

"My Mother died a week before I was hatched and my father died a little before. Harry is my friend and I let him ride me when ever he needs me."

Tonks blinked, looking stunned for a long moment before she looked at Harry and raised an eyebrow. "She lets you ride her when ever you need her? Hatched? She sounds like an animal or a bird more than a quite charming little girl." She said getting back to her feet and looking back down at the little girl who had narrowed her eyes at the animal comment.

Harry had winced at the animal comment and sighed softly. "I wouldn't say that again if I were you, Tonks. She is more than big enough for me to ride her when the need arises. Here, I'll show you. Silvenestri would you change to your true form please?" Harry said stepping back away from the child and pulling Tonks with him. He shared a conspiratorial grin and wink with the child and wondered just how Tonks would take what was to come.

Tonks looked at Harry and then at Silvenestri as she started to blur and grow in size and Tonks moved closer to Harry as she watched the little girl transform. Her eyes widened as the child grew and altered until she was in her true form, her wings half stretched and

sitting in a fashion rather reminiscent of the sphinx, her head held high while looking down at the two who watched her transformation.

"Oh my god she's a... a dragon!" Tonks whispered in awe as Silvenestri lowered her head and playfully and gently nudged Tonks with her nose.

Harry smiled at Tonks and then reached up and started to rub Silvenestri's nose while Tonks just looked in shock at the Silver dragon before her. "Tonks, she won't hurt you. In fact she will protect you if I am not around as she knows how much I care for you." He looked into the starlight eyes of the dragon knowing that Silvenestri knew how he felt for Tonks. He wanted both of the ladies in his life to understand and like each other.

Tonks nodded and slowly, in a dazed, reached up and started to run a hand gently over Silvenestri's nose. "Oh, Harry. She is beautiful and do you mean what you say? You like me as more than a friend?" Tonks said the last part to Harry while still running a hand over Silvenestri's nose, her eyes however firmly on the young man standing so close to her. She could not help thinking about his diary and what she had read over the day. What he had written there and what he now said filled her with a glow of warmth.

Harry nodded once, decisively and pulled Tonks closer to him with a confidence that far exceeded his sixteen year old looks and while still running his hand over Silvenestri's head he leaned in closer to her. Harry smiled and then with infinite gentleness he kissed her while his free hand moved around her hips to draw her closer.

Tonks closed her eyes and let the kiss deepen, feeling the warmth within her grow at the confidence of the warm body pressed to her own. 'A boy his age should not be this good.' she hushed her dazed thought, not able to do more than enjoy the sensations.

Tonks was short of breath when Harry finally let her lips go. With a small shiver of regret that the kiss had ended she looked up at Silvenestri who was watching them with a questioning look and Tonks gave a small smile and rubbed a little harder along the dragons jaw. "What? Never seen two people kiss before, Silvenestri?" Tonks



queried with a smile, bring both of her arms around Harry's neck pulling him in for another deep kiss which he made no effort to avoid.

The dragon snorted softly, wondering what was so fascinating about pushing lips together but the two humans were obviously enjoying it. "No, I have spent all of my time in caves and forests with Harry and he never left my side, not even to go after some of the village girls who seemed to want to chase him around a great deal of the time. I never did understand why they kept coming around. He does not seem to want to avoid you, that much is certain." Silvenestri nodded her head at them then with another soft snort lowered her head and butting her nose against them both, demanding some attention.

Tonks smiled, pleased to no end that Harry seemed not to have consorted with other women in the past and then kissed Silvenestri on the tip of her nose, marvelling at the warmth and apparent softness of the dragons skin. "I think I love you to Silvenestri. Now Harry, shouldn't we be getting back home and let me guess... you will want another room done for Silvenestri here?" she said looking back at Harry and giving him a smile.

Harry smiled back and nodded as Silvenestri blurred into the change and returned to her Human form and impulsively she jumped up into Harry's arms and hugged him after he let go of Tonks. She wanted her own hugs.

Tonks smiled at the little ones affections for Harry and the little girl jealousy that was quite endearing and lead the way out of the forest and back to number 4 Privet Drive.

It was sun set when Harry, still carrying Silvenestri and with Tonks leading them arrived at the Dursley's and walked up to the front door. On the walk back Tonks had told Harry everything that had happened to her over the day he had been absent right up until Harry had returned. She even told him what Dumbledore had said to her and waited for him to consider the information.

Finally Harry nodded and leaning forward he planted a quick kiss on her lips before looking at the door to Number 4. "Well, I think he was right about one thing."

Tonks frowned, looked at him for a long moment and then smiled. "Me too. Now all we have to do is make sure he does not keep us apart." Tonks finished by reaching out and taking Silvenestri out of Harry's arms, settling her on her own hip and giving her a quick reassuring hug.

Harry smiled, nodded once and open the door to number 4 only to be hit by his Aunt and Uncle at the same time yelling about what time of the day it was and the inconsiderate young upstart that he was.

Harry looked at Silvenestri and then Tonks and walked by them and sat down on one of the steps on the stairs, looking then at his red-faced relations with a small sigh of resignation. Tonks leaned against the wall with Silvenestri in her arms after they both looked at Harry. Half expecting him to say something the dragon child expected to see him rend these obnoxious and hideously impolite and noisy people limb from limb, but he just sat back and listened to his relative's rant in silence.

Silvanestri growled low in her throat but Tonks hushed her quietly and assured her it was going to be alright, this was just something that happened on a regular basis.

"Yes, I know what the time is but I had to pick up a friend who will be staying with me until school starts and before you say anything Tonks will be feeding her, not you." Harry said when their individual if simultaneous rants paused for breaths to be taken. You know I think we should have just walked right by and not stopped to take this. Harry thought to his friend while watching as his relatives blinked, he thought they rather resembled owls when they did that and silently apologised to Hedwig for even entertaining the thought.

Silvanestri blinked at him, slightly stunned by the outburst Harry seemed to take in his stride.

Petunia looked to Tonks to see Silvenestri in her arms and acquired a pinched look about her face before she flashed them with a hate filled look. "Whose child is that? Did you kidnap her, you little freak?" she spat at Harry while moving to stand behind Vernon.

A growl from deep within Harry was suppressed with difficulty but resisted the urge to teach them just how fed up he was with the treatment he had been taking for the last 15 years. He rose to his feet in an oddly graceful movement and pulled out his wand aiming for the two who made his life a living hell.

“You are to leave her alone.” His voice came out as a deep growl. “If she comes to me and says that you have abused her in any way I will come and personally finish what Mad-eye Moody started the other week. Do I make my self clear?”

Tonks looked at Harry with wide eyes never having seen him like this in the time that she had known him. The anger for these people that he felt was radiating from him in something like the manner in which a power plant gives off power.

Vernon Dursley looked scarred for a moment but got his backbone back fast when he remembered Harry was banned from doing magic outside of that institute for psychopaths he called a school. “Nice try boy, but if you use magic outside that school you’ll get expelled from it.” He said with a nasty smirk and lot of confidence looking Harry right in the eyes.

“True. I can’t use my wand outside of Hogwarts but what if I should use something else, hmmm?” Harry smiled a sweetly innocent smile. Putting his wand away he nodded to Tonks, his eyes meeting hers and clearly saying that he had been taught some new and interesting things while he was away.

Tonks nodded back and quickly worked her way past the confrontation taking place and started to go up the stairs to Harry’s room, leaving him to deal with his Aunt and Uncle and a little scared of the look in Harry’s eyes.

Tonks had just entered Harry’s magically modified bedroom when Silvenestri was pulled gently from her arms and she looked up in shock as the girl was taken from her by Molly and Arthur Weasley. Then strong arms closed around her and Mad-Eye Moody held her, his magic eye looking down at Harry on the ground floor. Glancing quickly around the room she saw that Dumbledore was sitting in one

of the chairs by the fire with Bill and Charley Weasley flanking him in the manner of two honour guards.

“What... Moody? What is going on here? Why are you all here?” Tonks said well aware that she was not only help physically by the man but was also in the grip of a binding spell.

Moody kept the binding spell up though neither his good eye nor his magic eye ever left Harry downstairs. She did not know what to make of this confrontation and she prayed that Silvanestri would not panic.

It was Dumbledore answered her, turning his gentle eyes to her and there was a hard glint there that was far from reassuring. “We are here to see if the unthinkable has happened. We are here to determine if Harry has learned the Dark Arts and, it would seem, that we need to learn where he got this child from.” He spoke quietly and with great dignity, as though he had all the time in the world while studying the child fighting to get out of Molly’s arms.

Tonks spared a valuable second or two trying to throw off the holding spell but was far from surprised when she failed. Moody kept renewing the spell as quickly as she worked against it and deciding enough was enough she looked at Silvenestri and tossed her head. Let them hear and realise that they could not treat them all like errant children. They deserved some respect and consideration.

“Inform Harry that he has guests!” she only hoped that Harry and Silvenestri had a way to talk to each other without screaming down the house.

Silvenestri quieted in Molly Weasley’s arms and nodded. She was aware that everyone looked at her and that none of them, even Tonks knew what she was capable of doing and she thought the looks they turned to her were rather funny. She did not know if she should be scared or not, these people did not radiate hate and rage the way those nasty people down stairs had but she closed her eyes and reached for him.

/Harry some people are here! I think they are going to try to take me from you. Be careful. What is Dark Arts? Do you have any?/ She opened her eyes and could see that everyone realised that she had

power within her but she smiled sweetly knowing that some fun was about to begin.

Harry who was standing at the bottom of the stairs smiling knowingly at his aunt and uncle turning his head to look up the stairs and with a dismissing sniff at his Uncle he started to walk up them. Placing his feet with care and confidence he missed the creaky ones as he went and sent his thoughts to his friend.

/Its alright, Silvanestri, I'll deal with them. Just get ready to get Tonks out of harms way./ Harry continued to climb the stairs and then he was standing in front of his door.

Moody watched as Harry walked up the stairs, noting the quiet confidence in that stride. This was not a nervous student coming before a group of teachers but something else again and he focused his magic eye on Harry, noting the amount of power and confidence he generated was far more than he had shown when he was here a week ago. Moody was quietly impressed and curious. This would be undoubtedly interesting.

Harry paused before the closed door and gestured at the door and under his breath whispered, "Come to me, my cloak."

In the room everyone, even Mad Eye Moody looked up in surprise as the silver cloak whipped itself into the air across the room before disappearing through the narrow gap in the doorway that Harry had caused. Everyone in the room had either seen or been told about the silver artefact at one time or another and they tensed as they exchanged glances.

Silvanestri giggled.

The door opened.

Bill looked from the bedroom door from which the cloak had appeared to where Harry was now standing, the cloak having settled to rest around his shoulders. The silver folds hid most of his body and the hood was pulled up, concealing most of Harry's face.

“Well what was the point in that?” he said quietly with his wand at the ready, eyeing the silver folds of the cloth curiously.

‘Good question and one to which I don’t know the answer at this time, but Harry is defiant. I can feel his defiance clearly enough feel too not just his power. Curiously his mind feels older.’ Moody thought while he kept Tonks under the holding spell and reflected that he was only just managing to hold her. She had gotten stronger over time and kept throwing the spell off faster and faster. He was quite pleased with her progress.

Harry fought down a quiver of unease and brought back to mind the years he had grown in the past. While he might look sixteen again he was something more than a student now. With a confident smile at them he turned his eyes to Molly who was holding Silvenestri around the waist.

“I think it would be a very good idea for you to let my friends go now or I can promise that you will all find you have bitten off more than you can chew.” Harry glared at Moody and let his voice slip into the Dragon Lords deeper register while pulling his wand out and pointing it confidently at Charley. He knew that his choice of target would be surprising to them but none of them knew just who and what Silvanestri was and Charlie could be the most dangerous to Silvanestri as he was the one who knew the most about dragons.

Dumbledore considered Harry for a moment seemingly not surprised at all by anything that had thus far happened and nodded to Moody who released Tonks but removed her wand from her in the same move. Tonks joined Harry who stepped around her, placing himself in front of her. “That is one, Old Man. Now Silvenestri and then you can all leave this house and I will see you at Hogwarts on September 1st, as always.”

Dumbledore shook his head gently and said, “No, Harry. You are going to explain to us everything that you have done over the last 24 hours. Everything that happened since you left this morning.”

Harry smiled and turned slightly to face Tonks and handed his wand to her without them seeing. “I’ll say this much to you, Professor. Death will not like you messing with a deal I have made with him. I

suggest that you let Silvenestri go.” In a low voice so only Tonks could hear he whispered to her, “Can you get this room large enough for Silvenestri to reach full size in under a minute?”

Tonks nodded and taking a deep breath she started to make the room grow larger with Harry’s wand, shocked to feel the power it held compared to her own wand. She was afraid of the confrontation building but she trusted him.

Dumbledore and the others looked around the room as it warped around them, growing larger and larger. “Harry what do you think you are doing?” Dumbledore murmured as he rose and moved next to Molly who was starting to have trouble holding Silvenestri as she struggled, trying to get to Harry. The little girl had even bitten Molly on the hand in an attempt to get out of her hold and to reach her friend.

Harry smiled then looked over at Silvenestri and shrugged. “Change, my friend, and show them what they have walked into.” We will deal with changing their memories later.

In a blink Silvenestri smiled and stopped fight Molly and her smile grew into a draconic smirk as she started to blur, her eyes almost glowing in glee at the fun she was about to have with these lesser wizards.

Molly and Arthur both backed away from this child, dropping her to the ground, as they retreated and Dumbledore too stepped back quickly. Moody looked on with interest as his magical eye told him that this child was under some form of powerful illusion type spell. Bill and Charley Weasley looked on in shock as Silvenestri started to grow in size.

The next thing Dumbledore knew he was face to face with a monster of legend. A large Silver dragon, wings folded close to its body as the room was only just big enough for its body to fit without crushing half of them. Two large horns were atop its head each horn a good three feet long. There was no spines running down its back or along the tail that folded neatly close to its left legs.

“What the hell is this?” Dumbledore whispered as Silvenestri lashed her tail around and knocked Molly and Arthur across the room with the hit, knocking them out cold but not harming them too badly.

Charley sucked in a shocked breath. The history of dragons was a necessary part of his studies to attain the position he now had and he knew exactly what stood before him. “A silver dragon! But they are extinct!” He said in complete shock his voice showing both fear and respect for this beast of legend.

“Professor Albus Dumbledore, I would like you to meet Silvenestri, my friend and companion.”

Drawing on the teachings of the Copper Dragon Lord Harry set a shield about himself that would negate any magic one of them might manage to throw at him. He reached deeper, drawing on his powers, reaching for the spell that was going to make this terrible hash of a home coming alright. “Now say good-bye to her and forget ever seeing her.” Harry thrust one hand up in the air to release the spell. “Memories are a very valuable thing Dumbledore, they hold power for good or ill. Now its time to forget having seen Silvenestri and myself today so until September 1st” a bright flash of light emitted from Harry’s hand and enveloped everyone in the room but Tonks and Silvenestri.

When it faded everyone was gone.

Harry was standing next to the fireplace when Tonks could see again and Silvenestri was still in her true draconic form and still standing where Dumbledore had been. The dragon looked bemused and not a little upset that her game had ended before it had really begun.

“Harry? Ah... what happened to everyone?” Tonks asked walking over to him and watching as Silvenestri blurred, changing back to her human form before she jumped into the chair Dumbledore had been sitting in when it all had started to go wrong.

“Well if the spell worked, and I do not see why it should not have done so, their memories have been altered so they all think that nothing happened to me in the past 24 hours. If I placed just the right amount of power into the spell then there will not even be a problem



at Hogwarts. Silvenestri should be allowed to come with me at the start of the school year and no one will comment on her presence.” Harry frowned as he considered the exact amount of effort he had placed in that spell but when he looked at Tonks he smiled. He was sure that he had gotten it just right and he looked at Silvenestri who was falling asleep in the chair.

Tonks followed Harry’s sight and smiled then noticed her wand lying next to Silvenestri on the chair. “Harry how did you get my wand back? Moody had it in his robes didn’t he?” she queried, taking it and placing it in its holster then handing Harry back his own wand.

Harry smiled taking his wand. “The spell I cast holds everyone but the caster in a moment in time for one minute per person in the room. That means that I had nine minutes to alter everyone’s memories with additional memory charms and to get your wand back.” Harry by then had walked up behind Tonks and warped his arms around her.

Tonks noted that Harry had also seemed to have found and retrieved the broach for his cloak as well and just smiled at him, leaning into his arms. “But how come they were gone when the spell was over instead of still being here?”

Harry chuckled and just shook his head slightly before he leaned close to Tonks’s ear. “Some mysteries are good for people to figure out themselves. Now help me get Silvenestri into your room since I think that you will be staying with me tonight.” He touched his lips lightly to her earlobe.

“You’re awfully confident, aren’t you, Mr. Potter?” Harry waggled his eyebrows at her and Tonks smiled. “But I think you might be right. This time.” Tonks looked down at Silvenestri and then at Harry “Will she keep this form over night or should I make my room larger now?”

Harry also looked at Silvenestri, still holding Tonks and enjoying her warmth against his body. He was very glad to be back with her and after this awful scene he was looking forward to being quite alone with her. “I would make it bigger now just to be safe.”

Tonks nodded and managed to get out of Harry’s grip, slapping him lightly on the arm as a gentle reprimand for imprisoning her when she

had work to do. Walking over to her room she started to make it larger even as the lounge shrank back to its usual proportions. Harry picked up Silvenestri and joined Tonks and they entered the bedroom where he placed Silvenestri on Tonks's bed and he pulled the blankets over her and planted a light kiss on her forehead by way of a good night.

Tonks watched Harry with a gentle smile, liking this new view of the teenager who seemed to be anything but a teenager. When he turned to her she lead the way to his room and quite promptly informed him that he could get those lecherous thoughts right out of his mind. They were going to be getting a good nights sleep.

'After all, Mr. Potter, I have to be certain that you love me. I don't do casual.' She mused as they settled to talk.

There would be nothing physical between them until she knew he loved her and it was not just a crush on either of their parts. As the night grew late they talked about the seven hours he had been gone. Seven hours for Tonks but so much longer for Harry. Tonks would know much of it before morning, if not all there was to know.

[illegible]

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## Chapter 10: Breaking the Ministry of Magic.

/ Telepathic /

09 August 1996 09:00 AM A.D

Tonks opened her eyes to the light flowing in from the window and looked around her to see Harry asleep under her as she was using his shoulder as a pillow. She smiled at this seeing that Harry had been truthful to her in everything he had done over the course of the previous day.

Tonks looked up at Harry and started to run a hand through his hair lightly so as not to wake him. Just then the door opened and Silvenestri walked in, dressed in a blue dress and black hair tie without batting an eyelash at the two of them in one bed. "Silvenestri I don't know how it was done over 2000 years ago but now a days most people knock before entering a room. Anyway what do you what sweetie?" Tonks said getting off Harry and pulling on Harry's shirt from last night over the light silk nightgown she wore.

Silvenestri looked at Tonks and then said with total innocence, "Why? I mean I know what you two were doing last night or what you were building up to do so why bother knocking?"

"Its just polite to do it first, regardless. How did you sleep?" Tonks said looking for any of her cloths before looking at Silvenestri and indicating that she should be quiet and let Harry continue to sleep.

Silvenestri nodded lowered her voice. "Ok, I'll try to remember that and I had a fine night but I miss having Harry sleeping next to me." A glint appeared in the child's eyes. "Where's the meat? I'm hungry."

Tonks looked at Silvenestri and considered the dragon turned child for a long moment. "Can you eat anything other than meat?" Motioning for Silvanestri to follow her she led the way out of the room.

"Oh, I CAN eat human food if I have to but..." silver blue eyes seemed to grow as big as saucers and pale lashes fluttered endearingly. "I got to have some nice raw meat, nicely bloody and juicy, still warm from the kill. I am a growing dragon after all."

Silvenestri settled her neat little rump into one of the chairs in front of the fire with a sweet smile.

Tonks stared at the child, a faint green tinge colouring normally pale skin and sank into another chair her thoughts frantically flitting over ways to feed Silvenestri without killing the local cats and dogs.

“Ah, I think that some bacon and eggs will have to do for breakfast this morning, maybe with extra bacon for you. At least until Harry wakes up.” Tonks said after a while settling for the safer options and standing she offered a hand to Silvenestri. “Won’t that do for now?”

Silvenestri smiled at Tonks. “Okay.” She chirped brightly and taking her hand accompanied her downstairs.

Tonks almost hesitated on entering the kitchen and finding Petunia making breakfast for Dudley and Vernon who were at the table talking about Dudley and his boxing training. Taking a deep breath and promising herself she would not turn all three into wall hangings reading ‘Idiot abound!’ she led the child into the room.

Petunia glanced over her shoulder at Tonks and Silvenestri hearing them enter the room and immediately went back to the eggs she was cooking until what she saw actually registered. With a hiss she spun to face Tonks. “What the hell are you warring?” she demanded and reached to clip Dudley under the ears on noticing that his jaw was hanging almost to his knees at the amount of leg Tonks was showing for all the world to see.

Refusing to wince or run for the bedroom Tonks headed into the kitchen and toward the workbench. “I am wearing a shirt that belongs to your nephew who is still asleep and I am intending to see about breakfast. Now if you are done with asking questions to which the answer is patently obvious I have to feed little Silvenestri here.” Tonks slipped by Petunia and started to make enough bacon and eggs for Harry, Silvenestri and herself while trying not to think of what Dudley must be thinking judging from the amount of drool forming at his feet.

Petunia hissed her displeasure but aware that she had a fully trained witch who was not banned from using magic quickly got out of the

way and served her son and husband their breakfast. With a furious look at her son she made certain to stand between him and Tonks, scowling at the boy as he tried to peer around her for another look at Tonks.

Silvenestri was sitting on a stool in front of the main counter watching as Tonks cooked the bacon and eggs on the stove while humming some song she could recall Harry humming while he had been busy with making his armour and weapon. She scowled as she watched the bacon crisping in the pan, thinking why did humans have this nasty habit of cooking perfectly good meat? They took all of the lovely juices and gamy flavour out by heating it beyond its natural living temperature.

Tonks had just finished cooking their breakfast when Harry walked into the room wearing just his pants since Tonks had taken his only good shirt. "Well that is something I could get use to waking up to." Harry said kissing Silvenestri on the head and then Tonks on the cheek.

"Morning Harry. I was going to give you breakfast in bed but seeing that you're here we might as well stay here to eat." Tonks placed the plates in front of Harry and Silvenestri before getting her own and sitting down next to Harry, one hand quickly gripping his in a tight squeeze under the table and beginning to eat her breakfast with one hand while Harry squeezed back quickly and did the same.

Harry smiled and looked at Silvenestri who was staring at the crispy bacon with a look he knew very well indeed. He decided it would be good to distract her from her complaints about overcooked food. "So how was your night, my dear?"

Before Silvenestri could answer Vernon Dursley exploded. "BOY! Aren't the cloths we give you good enough for you now? Must you go around naked?" he growled like one of Aunt Marge's Bulldogs.

Harry looked down at himself then at Tonks and back to his Uncle who seemed to be having trouble taking his eyes off Tonks enough to glare at Harry. Seeing that look and the puddle of drool Dudley was creating Harry sniffed his eyes behind his glasses glinting dangerously.

"You mean the hand me downs you have been giving me for the past 15 years? Well the only really good shirt I have at the moment that is not dirty is the one Tonks now has on but if it bothers you so much... Tonks would you mind awfully giving me the shirt for breakfast? I wasn't going to ask since it could be a bit embarrassing for you..." Harry held a hand out toward Tonks.

"Vernon shut up!" screeched Petunia and reached out to twist Dudley's ear, forcing his head down to his breakfast plate. "Don't come to the kitchen or anywhere in the house without being dressed appropriately in future." She hissed at Harry and Tonks and glared at Vernon until he tore his eyes away from Tonks and attended to his own breakfast.

"Yes, Aunt Petunia." Harry mildly returned and returned his attention to his meal and began to plan his day with Silvenestri and Tonks.

Silvanestri watched the entire play with wide eyes and enough interest to give no further thought to hideously overcooked food and wondered why the fat boy had a face like raw meat. Such a becoming colour and she could just hear the blood thumping through his body. 'Humans.' It made her quite hungry.

Later in his room Harry settled to talk to Tonks in his living room. He had a plan for what must be done but he needed help to carry it out. "Tonks I need a favour. I made a deal with Death that I need to honour and to do that I need to get to the portal Sirius fell through in the Ministry. I have to close it but to do that I need to get Silvenestri in there." Harry drew Tonks onto his lap.

A little later that morning saw Silvenestri in her true form curled fast asleep in one corner of the magically enlarged room with a powerful locking charm placed on the door by Tonks to ensure that no one could enter.

"Now, Harry. Everyone who enters the Ministry needs to be identified. Before you can enter the room with the Gate how do you plan on even entering that place how do you plan on getting into the Ministry your self much less with Silvenestri?" Tonks queried, leaning her head on Harry's shoulder.

“Oh I have away to get by their wards and charms but it will only work on me, not Silvanestri. That is why I need the favour from you. You see Silvenestri must get to that gate at the exact same time as I do so that we can close the gate together.” Harry ran a hand through Tonks’s hair, smiling at the scent of the apricot shampoo Tonks had used in her hair that morning. It was a scent he was rather partial to.

“Well I suppose that I could pass her off as a friend’s daughter and say that I was asked to look after her for the day. That should work, but how do you plan on getting yourself in. If you don’t mind telling me, of course?” Tonks turned her attention to the sleeping dragon before nuzzling her nose into Harry’s neck.

Harry sighed and reached to pull his cloak off the chair next to him. “This is more than just a piece of cloth, Tonks. It not only protects me from low powered spells and physical attacks but it also allows the wearer to change their appearance by adding years to them. I’ll just age myself a few years with this and no one will be able to tell its me.” He smiled at the look on Tonks’s face.

She looked at the cloak and then back to Harry. "Could you make me one of those cloaks?" Tonks ran a hand through his hair, a small innocent smile on her face.

Harry looked at Tonks and raised an eyebrow at her before looking at Silvenstri and then examining her wings. "Well, you will have to wait for her to grow a little more. When she starts shedding again I will have the materials, but I don't see why I can't. I will need a blacksmith shop of course and a few other things." He grinned and then with Tonks still in his arms, held bridal style he pushed to his feet, planted a kiss on her lips and set her down gently.

Tonks returned his smile and while Harry went off to get a shower and get ready for the nights raid she moved to Silvanestri and started to run a hand along her jaw, amazed at the warmth that emanated from the dragon.

[illegible]

09 August 1996 20:00 PM A.D

The night watchman was sitting in his booth outside of the main elevator of the Ministry with a bored look on his face. He was young, fresh out of the academy for Auror training and being the new guy he had naturally been stuck with night watch, the most boring duty at the ministry. His light brown hair was long and pulled back into a ponytail while his dark blue eyes were fighting to stay open. He had had little sleep over the past couple of days and he was longing for his watch to be over.

The clock had just gone 8:00 pm when the fireplace on the other side of four recently repaired statues flared and a young woman and a child stepped out and started to walk over toward the guard.

"May I help you, Miss?" the man said getting up out of his chair and walking over to the woman with the stunningly pink hair and the dark haired child who clung to her hand and looked around with wide eyed interest.

"Yes. I am Nymphadora Tonks." The woman made a face at her first name but kept on talking. "I have been out of town for the past week and when I returned a while ago a message was waiting for me to tell me that I needed to finish all of the paper work that had been growing on my desk. Some of it appears to be needed sooner than I had thought. I had nothing better to do now so... here I am." She flashed him a charming smile.

The guard looked at Tonks and after a moment held out his hand for her wand and looked at the little girl. "This is your daughter?" he queried leading the way to the booth.

Tonks looked at Silvernestri and smiled. "She is a friend's daughter and I was asked to look after her for tonight. Since she appears to be a bit of a night owl and would not settle down I decided why scream at her to go to bed? I have work to do and if she will not sleep she may as well find out what grown ups do at night and when she finds out that it is sooo boring maybe then she will give in and sleep."

The guard nodded and ran the necessary test on Tonks's wand. "All done. Have a good night Miss." The guard said handing Tonks her wand and after a few more questions he produced a nametag for



Silvenestri who was going under the name of Rose Even, pinning it to her dress.

The dragon flashed him a winning innocent little smile and batted her eyelids at him, fingering the name tag for a moment and with a disgustingly sweet display hugged Tonks's hand to her breast. "Look what I have." She thrust her chest out toward Tonks and grinned happily.

Tonks smiled, looking slightly strained at this display but nodded to the guard and walked by with Silvenestri holding her hand. "Yes, dear. It suits you. Come along now. I have work to do."

Moving quickly she led her charge to the elevator and pressed down, watching as the guard settled back into his chair. Safely in the lift and taking the elevator down to the bottom floor she wondered how long it would be before Harry joined them and if Harry could get past the guard and into the Ministry proper.

The guard had just settled back to think about the attractive young woman when the Muggle entrance opened and a cloak man walked out of the booth and looked around. "Can I help you, Sir?" the guard unobtrusively pulled his wand out using the table as a cover for his actions. 'What is it, late night at the Ministry tonight?' He thought. 'Usually this place is dead at this hour.'

"Yes, I would like to get to the gate room in the lower levels and I came to get my wand checked first." The man handed over the wand, his face still hidden by his cloak.

The guard took the wand while keeping a wary eye on the man whose face was hidden from sight. To his test the wand checked out as not being owned by any known Death Eater but still, this man said he wanted to get to the lower levels of the Ministry. That was restricted. "Well, you check out so I'll have someone take you down there. If you don't mind what do you plan on doing down there?" he queried offering the man his wand back.

"Oh sorry. I apologise, I am a bit absent minded. I'm a bit of an archaeologist and I heard about the gate and come to take a look at it. I need to determine how old it is and what it does. Curiosity has

always been my downfall and I just arrived from a very long port key. I absolutely had to come and see it right away. If that is all may I go through now?" The man retrieved his wand and looked at the guard, the shadows of the cowl still hiding his face.

The guard nodded and watched as the man left and headed down to the lower levels, absently wondering who he was. He yawned, settling back into his chair and looking about him with eyelids growing heavy. He did not notice the fine silver mist that hung about the hand he had been holding the wand in and his eyes drifted shut.

With a start he snapped erect in his chair, blinking furiously and glanced about quickly to make certain that no one had noticed him drift off. With a sigh he rubbed at his face and wished that the night watch was not so boring. It was rare that anyone ever came to the Ministry at this hour and he was bored. He wondered if it was against the rules for him to read a book while on duty. Gradually his eyes drifted shut and he began to dream. In the morning, when questioned he would tell them about the three masked intruders who had knocked him out after a short and vicious exchange of dodging stunning curses. It had been a quiet night until the intruders had come.

[illegible]

“Harry?” Tonks queried as the tall cloaked stranger stepped from the elevator. Silvanestri did not seem alarmed at all as the robed stranger approached.

Harry tilted the cowl of the robe back and flashed a grin at Tonks who looked immensely relieved at seeing him and noted that Silvenestri looked bored and brightened at the prospect of some action now that he had arrived. Tonks lightly touched his cheek, admiring the older Harry before forcing herself to attend to business.

“Hey there. Well that was the easy part done. Now comes the hard part.” Harry said giving Tonks a kiss and Silvenestri a hug.

Tonks smiled at Harry and lead the way through the hall of doors and then chose one after they had finished moving. They found

themselves in the room where the prophecies were stored and Harry glanced quickly around trying to see if he could find the door leading to the gate room. He ignored the racks full of small golden globes though he felt a shiver run up his spine at the thought of what might lie there. Perhaps amid the prophecies there was something about what he was about to do?

“Tonks do you know you’re way around here or do we need to get Silvenestri to show use the way?” Harry queried after looking around the room and firmly telling himself to mind his business and get on with the task at hand.

Tonks looked at Silvenestri and then at Harry. “Well, I’ve never actually been here before not even to save you a few months ago. Silvanestri has never been here either so how will she be able to find it for us?” she looked at the little girl in Harry’s arms.

Harry smiled and looked fondly at Silvenestri. “My dear, I need you to use your power to find the gate.” he said putting her down on the ground and then stepping back to stand next to Tonks.

Silvenestri took a step away from Harry and closed her eyes but Tonks could plainly see that a low glow of light come from under her lids as she started to walk down one of the halls. Harry nodded slightly and took Tonks by the hand, following a step or two behind the dragon.

It was a half-hour later before Silvenestri stopped in front of a wooden door with a gold handle and tilted her head. After a moment she nodded decisively. “It should be through here, Harry.”

With a small sigh Harry nodded his thanks and opened the door to show. The room was dominated by the gate which was draped with a blood red cloth covering its sinister form.

“That’s it. Good job, Dear Heart.” Harry murmured, kissing Silvenestri on the head. “We must waist no time and close it quickly. Tonks watch the doors leading out of this room as best you can. Silvenestri you should hide behind the gate as you did before, just in case we have trouble.” He squared his shoulders and strode down the dark isles of the gate chamber.

Tonks and Silvenestri glanced at each other and nodded once, firmly as Harry walked in front of the gate then Tonks vanished into the gloom of the room and Silvenestri scampered into the room and behind the gate to wait out of sight for Harry to give the signal.

Harry looked at the draping vale covering the gate and with a deep breath grasped the cloth and with one sharp tug pulled it off to reveal the familiar black shimmering and stone arch. It brought back so many unpleasant memories.

"I'm sorry, Sirius. I'm so sorry. I know that I promised I would find a way to get you back but... I have no other choice. I must close this now to keep my agreement with Death and to keep Silvenestri with me. I... I hope that you can understand. I'm sorry and now..." he drew a deep breath. "Its good-bye, Sirius."

Forcing the raging guilt down that he was leaving his godfather in the realm of the dead Harry composed himself and brought to mind the chant and the symbols he would need. When he was convinced that he could recite the chant exactly as it was needed and not falter at the thought of abandoning Sirius to his fate he lifted his head and began to chant. It was the same spell that he had cast over 2000 years ago to seal the gate in that far away time. Even as the first words rolled from his tongue his eyes closed against the tears that wanted to roll down his face at what he was about to do. What he had to do. He would not permit his grief to distract him.

Holding firmly to the rhythm and cadence of the chant Harry forced himself to steady and had just started the first of the runes, tracing them in the air when he heard the sound of running feet. Five Auror's came running into the room from a door to the side of the one Harry and his friends had entered by and he cursed that there were so many doors in this chamber.

"Don't move Mister. You're under arrest for trespassing and unauthorised spell casting in a restricted area. Now are you going to come quietly or do we have to use force?" The leader had his wand pointed at Harry while the other four were looking around the room trying to find the other two intruders that the alarm wards set around this chamber had detected.

Harry kept his hooded pulled up and looked at the team of Auror's wondering where he had missed an alarm but it could not be helped. There were three men and two women in the team all of them dressed in Auror robes of light blue. The two women were looking close to where he knew Tonks was hiding while the others started to walk down to Harry with their wands trained on him and a hard light in their eyes.

"Gentlemen I have no other choice but to be here. I will give you one change to leave now. I advise that you take the chance." Harry kept one hand under his cloak as he set the major spell in stasis to await the moment when he could complete the casting of it. 'Why does it seem as though history is repeating itself? This is just about the same place in the casting when I was interrupted before.' He mused. His hidden hand already was tracing one rune getting ready for any fighting that might happen. He did not believe for an instant that they would quietly walk away.

The leader looked at the cloaked man before him sensing a danger there that he had not felt before. This man was dangerous and must not be taken lightly. "And what are you doing here might I ask?" He said noting one of his men edging around the back of the gate while the two women searching the upper seating area for the other intruders.

The fifth Auror stood to one side watching Harry watching events closely, studying the intruder and trying to catch a glimpse of a wand. The instant he saw a wand he was going to strike.

"I need to close this gate to the plane of the dead for reasons that at this time do not concern you. Now if you don't mind I have work to do and I do not need the distraction that you represent." With that Harry turned back to the gate even though he felt his back crawl expecting a spell to be flung at him and picked up the chant where he had left off, fingers flying through the shaping of the runes. He could only hope that he had cast the magic into his cloak in the making of it and that the cloak could take the spells they might cast. 'After all, magic has changed a great deal over time. The question is has it changed that much?' He thought his free hand tracing the ruins before him.

“Stop or I’ll stun you!” The leader shouted.

There was a shout from the far side of the gate and after a moment the Auror emerged with Silvenestri in his arms trying to hold her while also avoid being bitten by her. “Who would bring a kid into a situation like this?”

Harry snarled as he suspended the spell once again on seeing Silvenestri in the man’s arms. “Let her go now!” Harry glared at the man as one of the hunters in the upper stage area made a sound of triumph and from the corner of his eye Harry saw her vanish from sight.

“You will come with us or I can not guaranty the child’s safety.” the leader returned.

Harry’s eyes flickered as he noted the second woman in the upper half of the room vanish and he forced himself not to react. He had every confidence in Tonks but they really needed to get their hands off Silvanestri.

“I’ll tell you what. You let the girl go and let me finish what I have to do here and then you will never have to set eyes on me again.” He said half turning to glare at the leader, shifting one hand so it was hidden but aimed at the leader.

“I will do no such thing. People in your position do not make bargains. Now come along.”

The leader snarled, growing angry at what he saw as overconfident cheek from a man in no position to be confident. Before he could move another step toward Harry the man behind him was hit by a stunning charm in the back and for an instant he thought he saw the little girls eyes glow just as the Auror holding her stiffened, doing a fine imitation of a carved statue. Silvenestri crawled out of his arms and skipped over to Harry with an angelic smile.

Harry smiled down at the little girl and then glanced at the remaining Auror. “Now I really need to finish this spell and you need to take a nap.” Harry said with a gentle smile, flicking a finger in the direction of the leader and his fingers writhed to inscribe an intricate rune as he

initiated the key word to release the stunning charm. With a gasp the mans body became rigid and then toppled to the floor.

After the leader when down Tonks walked out of the shadows her hair now jet black as was her skin and only her eyes making her visible in the darkness. "Hurry up and finish it, Harry. There are at least another twenty guards on duty tonight and I really do not want them coming down here to look for the Auror team."

Joining Harry she took up a position next to him while Silvenestri walked back around the gate to where she had been before being drugged out.

Harry nodded and composed himself the launched himself into the concluding stages of the spell under Tonks's watchful eyes. He his eyes closed he forced down the surge of guilt that rose on facing the gate but he could not think of Sirius now.

It took an hour of complex chanting and intricate rune shaping before the black shimmering stopped and held motionless, like reflective black glass. For a moment the image of a white horse with a black robed rider was seen. The cowled form on the horse nodded once, a solemn bowing of the robed head and then the blackness shattered like a panel of glass showing Silvenestri standing on the other side.

"It's done." Harry whispered in a croak, his throat dry after the complex casting. "Silvenestri make sure that they never open this thing again." Harry moved away from the gate drawing Tonks with him and stood with his arm around her waist.

Tonks watched in silence as Silvenestri changed into her true form and rose up on her hind legs. Placing her front legs on the top of the gate she looked down at Harry and Tonks. Harry nodded solemnly and she pushing down on the stone arch with a grunt of effort. A groan of protest came from the structure before the dragon heaved again and the gate collapsed under her weight and strength creating a large dust cloud around her, blocking Harry and Tonks's vision for a moment.

When the dust had settled Silvenestri was had reverted to her human form and she walked over to Tonks and Harry eager to exit from the

Ministry of Magic. Harry stared at the ruins for a moment and turned away from the scene to begin a night of celebration and mourning for the life and death of Sirius Black and to celebrate that Silvenestri had joining them in this time. He had no doubt that Death would keep his word.

[illegible]

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A/N: Also I would like to say to everyone that I am posting them as fast as I can write them so please don't kill me if it takes a while for the next chapter to get here.



## Chapter 11: Hogwarts and Dragons.

/ Telepathic /

01 September 1996 09:45 PM A.D

It was the day for Harry to return to Hogwarts, but Harry and Silvenestri were still at the Dursley' at 9:45 am, Tonks having left earlier that morning for guard duty at the platform.

Harry was hoping to get to the platform by ten but Silvenestri unfortunately was going through molt and was not willing to move. The dragon was sprawled in the lounge, her large silver form twitching every now and then followed by a furious bout of scratching and rubbing against the floor.

"Silvenestri come on. We have to move. You can go to the forest when we get there and finish your shedding in peace, but we have to go now." Harry watched the dragon in his living room tapping one foot impatiently. He wanted to see Tonks before being pinned by his friends who would want answers about what happened to him over the summer.

Silvenestri looked at Harry with a look that spoke clearly of her irritation and unwillingness to move before snorting her disgust. Her form blurred and shrank and the little girl stood there dressed in black and silver Muggle clothing with her silver hair pulled back into a ponytail.

"Fine! You have no idea what shedding is like, do you? You can't understand. When we get to this train thing you can just leave me alone. Train thingy. Carriage? What ever it is." She grumbled while walking to join Harry who was standing by the fire.

Well knowing what a shedding dragon's temper was like Harry ignored her tirade. He nodded and made certain that all the things they would need at school were in his pocket, thankful that Tonks had shrunk them down the night before.

After making sure Silvenestri looked presentable Harry took some floo powder and handed it to Silvenestri. "Ok. You go first and when

you get there don't wander around. Just wait for me or for Tonks to find. Understand?"

Silvenestri nodded and took the powder from Harry's hand stalking to the fireplace and muttering darkly about idiot Dragon Lords who thought that malting dragons were turned into morons. Of course she understood what she had to do. With a final grumble she threw the powder into the fire and called out the name of the platform and in a burst of green flame she was gone.

Harry grinned, knowing he really should not irritate a malting dragon but she could be such fun when she was malting, She was just so incredibly easy to annoy. Taking one last look around the room and he stepped into the fireplace and followed Silvenestri to platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$  and for the ride to Hogwarts for the New Year. He knew already that it was going to be an unusual year, even for him.

Harry arrived at the platform a moment later into the usual mad confusion. Most of the students had all ready arrived and were talking with friends they had not seen over the summer break.

Looking for the distinctive silver hair of Silvenestri Harry began to frown when he couldn't see her anywhere. Giving a sigh and worrying that the confusion had been too much for the irritable dragon child Harry reached out with his mind. / Silvenestri, where are you? / He began to fight his way away from the floo exit and through the crowd of students and parents.

/ Over by the gate to Muggle London. At least that is what this man said. / She sent back to Harry who promptly altered his direction whilst muttering about idiotic people moving children around and away from the floo exit when their parents could be right behind them. He really should do something to them if he should ever find out who did it.

/I'm coming. Stay there. /

Harry arrived at the gate in time to see Hermione and her parents arriving through the gate. They were followed through by Ron and Ginny behind them and Mrs Weasley arrived last. All of them were

talking about how their summer had been and how much fun the new year might be.

Hermione was the first to notice the little silver haired girl standing by the gate with a very bored look on her face. "Are you all right? Lost you parents?" Hermione asked as she crouched down next to the girl. She found herself looking into starlight eyes that looked back at her with an almost judging expression within their depths.

Silvenestri looked Hermione up and down, ready to snap that of course she was alright when she realised that she knew this girl. With narrowed eyes she flicked her gaze over Ron, recognising them both from Harry's photos before and deciding that she might have to be polite or irritate Harry for being rude to his friends.

"No, I'm fine thank you Hermione. I am just waiting for Harry to come and get me." Spotting Molly in behind them Silvenestri gave a small secret smile at thought of what she had done that day a few weeks ago.

Hermione looked at the girl before her. 'Harry? When did Harry look after a little girl?' she thought and was joined by Molly and her two children in her speculation. "Oh. Where is Harry? I haven't seen him all summer." Hermione said standing up and allowing Molly to look at this absolutely adorable child before them.

Silvenestri sensed that Harry was close and looked around the station, then pointed to a cloaked man standing less than 6 feet tall, the cowl of his cloak hiding his face. "There he is." With a wide grin that had Molly cooing she ran up to Harry who quickly caught her up in a tight hug. "Harry, next time you go first." Silvenestri insisted after Harry gently put her down.

Harry nodded in quiet agreement and with a deep breath prepared himself to face the questions and walked briskly up to Hermione and Ron, pulling his hood back and giving them both a smile. "Hey you guys. So how was your summer?" He said as Silvenestri stood close to him and one of her tiny hands crept into his.

Molly frowned at the sight of Harry and the child together. She had the strangest feeling that she had met this child before but she could

not place where. "Harry, before you go into what happened this summer could you tell me why you are looking after this little girl?"

Harry smiled and looked down at Silvenestri who was starting to look restless and was probably getting hungry. Malting dragons were notorious for having no patience and she had not been feeling like eating this morning.

"Her parents threw her out for being a witch so I look after her now. I found her on the streets and took her home and when she found out she was a witch Aunt Petunia ordered me to look after her. Mrs Weasley, Hermione, Ron and Ginny, this is Silvenestri." Harry slipped a piece of beef jerky to Silvanestri for her to chew on while they made their way toward the train.

Molly, Hermione and Ginny looked at Harry with wide eyes when he gave the beef to Silvenestri and were about to say something when Tonks walked by and told them that the train was leaving soon. Everyone quickly said their good-byes to their parents and Molly and Mrs Granger whispered to Harry that beef jerky was not exactly appropriate to feed a little girl before Harry managed to board the train. He saw Tonks board the train before he drew Silvanestri into the carriage in search of a seat.

Harry found seating in the last carriage from the trains engine and settled there with Silvenestri and Tonks and joined them soon after. Harry found himself wondering what he was going to do about his friends if they found out about Silvenestri. For a while they watched as Silvanestri squirmed on the seat, trying to get comfortable and Harry knew her malt was really beginning to annoy her.

Tonks sighed and settled on Harry's lap and drew Silvenestri to lie on the seat beside him. The dragon child curled up like a cat and Tonks stroked her hair soothingly until she finally fell asleep next to them, her hair taken out of the pony tail and permitted to fall over the side of the seat pooling on the floor a little.

"So Harry, how did it go back home after I left?" Tonks asked while running a hand through his shoulder length hair.

“Oh, nothing much happened. We had a small delay because Silvenestri has started shedding scales and that always makes her irritable. She did not want to get up or eat but other than that it was all right.” Harry replied, placing another piece of jerky next to Silvenestri’s nose while giving Tonks a quick kiss. “She will eat the jerky when she wakes up and that will content her until she can hunt.”

Tonks nodded and after sharing another kiss she slipped off of his lap. It was only a few minutes later when Ginny walked into the carriage with her things. “Hey. Harry can you help me with this?” she said seeing Harry and Tonks there.

Harry nodded and got up and helped pull in the trunk then lifted it to the overhead rack and moved back to his seat as Tonks rose and said that she had to patrol the train but that she would be back later.

Harry nodded and just as he sat down Silvenestri jumped off the seat and into his lap while chewing furiously on the jerky. There was a faintly feral look about her, with her eyes gleaming and her hair now in wild disarray. Harry smiled at her and lightly smoother her hair back from her face and then looked at Ginny who was sitting across from him with a slight smile on her face.

“So, Ginny. What did you do this summer? I take it you didn’t make Prefect.” Harry asked while continuing to run a hand through Silvenestri hair in an effort to tame it a little.

Ginny looked out the window as the train lurched into motion. “Nothing of interest just helped the twins with their shop. Your right, I didn’t make prefect but I don’t mind. What about you? I mean you look far stronger than you did before and now your acting like you’re a father.” She looked at Harry and Silvenestri who had finished now her snack and was giving her a small content smile. She smiled back at the little girl.

Harry checked that Silvenestri had at least eaten neatly and then looked up at Ginny. “Yes, well having Tonks train me over the summer helps with the strength and as for Silvenestri... well, after she was thrown out of her home and the Dursley’s found out that she was a witch I just bonded with her. We get on really well. We understand each other.”

Ginny nodded and settled down and while the train roared through the countryside she talked with Harry about the summer and what they would be studying this year. Ron and Hermione from their Prefect meeting and settled into seats. Harry sat back and listened to them all talk about their summer. When asked about his summer he smiled and said that other than gaining Silvenestri, it had been the usual sort of thing, fight with the Dursleys, train with Tonks, fight with the Dursleys... That sort of thing.

The lunch trolley came and went and Harry was able to get Silvenestri to eat some chocolate frogs but the child refused to eat much.

/ Silvenestri, are you feeling all right? Are you able to keep your form?  
/ Harry thought to her while Ron and Hermione sitting across from him continued talking about their summer.

He was silently wishing that his training as a Dragon Lord could have been completed, afraid that he might not know enough about the needs of a dragon. One thing that did worry him was that some foods eaten so commonly now just didn't exist in the past. He was afraid that feeding her the wrong thing, or too much or not enough of something might harm or even kill Silvenestri. All he could do was give her samples and hope that there would not be a bad reaction.

Silvenestri shook her head and whimpered softly as she started to look even sicker than before.

Harry looked into her eyes and he could see the struggle there. She was losing control and it was inevitable that she would change back to her normal form soon. Harry sprang to his feet and ran over to the car door yanking it open and yelled down the hall, not caring what others might think.

**"TONKS GET HERE NOW!"**

Tonks showed up at a run, a little out of breath but stepped into the carriage in time to see Silvenestri fall on to the floor and start to give off a low glow. She only hoped that none of the others had noticed the glow as she scooped the child into her arms and nodded to Harry

before she vanished with a pop. Outside of the limits of Hogwarts wards she reappeared, the child glowing in her arms.

Back on the train Hermione and Ginny looked at Harry with concern as he dropped into the seat where Silvenestri had been sitting until a moment ago. The worried expression on his face did not show just how frightened he was at what might be happening with his friend, but he dared not show his fear here and now.

"Harry will she be alright?" Ginny whispered.

"Why did you call for Tonks and not some one else?" Hermione queried moving to sit next to Harry.

"I'm sure that she will be fine in a day or two. It's just that... she was a little sick this morning and I guess the chocolate didn't agree with her." Harry sighed. "The reason I called for Tonks is because Silvenestri and Tonks are like sisters now and well... I didn't want someone she does not know taking her anywhere. Besides, I knew that Tonks was on patrol in this section of the train." Harry looked out of the window, worrying about what might be happening to Silvenestri.

Hermione looked at Harry and could see the concern for Silvenestri in his eyes. "It's alright Harry. I'm sure that Tonks and Madam Pomfrey can get her well. Why by the opening term feast she will be sitting there all smiles and with a hearty appetite. Now why don't you tell us what you did this summer? You never said much before." She gave him a quick hug to let him know she was there for him and that she really was sure that Silvenestri would be ok.

Harry nodded, a slightly glazed look in his eye at the thought of just how healthy an appetite that particular little girl could exercise. After taking a deep breath to steady himself he told her about his summer of training. Leaving out the fact that he had been dating Tonks, not just studying with her, going back in time, making deals with none other than the Grim Reaper and breaking into the Ministry of Magic to destroy a priceless artefact. Oh yes, he thought, and acquiring a dragon. Yes, he reflected, it was not a very eventful summer at all.

Harry told them of his training under Tonks and of how she was such a hard to satisfy teacher, resisting the urge to grin like an idiot.

Hermione jumped up and opening her trunk rummaged around in the contents before she straightened with a paper in hand.

“Harry did you hear about what happened at the Ministry the other week? Here, I saved this for you to read.” She handed him the newspaper cut out before sitting down and waiting for him to read it.

Harry read the headline and raised an eyebrow, fighting down the urge to fidget.

### **Ministry Lost Artefact**

*Strange break in at the Ministry of Magic.*

*It is reported that unidentified persons broke into the Ministry of Magic and destroyed a powerful artefact dated from the time of Merlin. It has been rumoured that the artefact, a Magical Portal, has for years been used by the justice department of the Ministry to punish dangerous criminals. This rumour has been denied by the Minister, who claims that the portal was kept at the ministry for safekeeping as it was considered to be an extremely dangerous item. The Minister of Magic said in an interview with this reporter that the incident is being investigated and that a search is under way for the criminals.*

*Our sources claim that a total of six Aurors were attacked and that all six had been hit with either stunning or Body binding spells. Sources say that the Aurors were found in the gate room and in the main lobby of the Ministry. The leader of the Auror team claims that there were three people involved in the break in though other sources suggest up to seven might have been involved. One person has been described as being male, approximately 6 feet tall and was wearing a silver cloak adorned with gray runes on the hem. A more detailed description is not available at this time. An unsubstantiated rumour claims that one of the criminals was described as being a little girl no older than 6 years of age with black hair and green eyes. A Ministry spokesman states that this description is extremely suspect as it is thought that the criminal was disguised by a spell.*

*The artefact that was attacked is said to have been destroyed beyond repair. The Ministry requests that should anyone see persons*



*matching the people described report it to the Auror in charge of the case, one Kingsley Shacklebolt.*

Harry looked up at Hermione and Ron to discover that, Ginny had left the carriage while he had been reading. "Well, that was unusual. I wonder who did it?" He commented, careful to keep a straight face and not reveal his amusement.

"Harry." Hermione whispered. "You do know that you can't get Sirius back now that the gate is destroyed, right?"

Ron nodded his head in agreement, sitting opposite Harry, watching as Hermione rested a hand lightly on Harry's shoulder. He knew how upset Harry had been when Sirius fell through the gateway.

Harry nodded and it was not hard at all to look sad. He had come to grips with Sirius's death with the help of Tonks and though he would always think of his god father with sorrow and longing, he could move on.

With a pop of displaced air Tonks appeared right in front of Harry and his friends. Leaning close to Harry and in a low voice so that Hermione and Ron wouldn't hear she assured him that Silvanestri was alright. "I got there just in time and she is in the forest now resting. She should be at the table waiting for you when you arrive but I'll tell you now. Don't ever give her chocolate again or I'll feed you to the sharks. She is allergic to it, Harry. "

Harry nodded wide eyed with relief and let Tonks go back to her job then he told Hermione and Ron that Silvenestri was fine and that she would meet them at the feast. He sighed and said that she had not told him that she was allergic to chocolate.

"Perhaps she did not know?" Hermione murmured. "We all will make sure that she eats nothing with chocolate in it."

The rest of the trip was uneventful with Tonks stopping by every now and then to see how everyone was doing and to talk with Harry about how he could improve his training.

The ride from the station up to the castle was just as uneventful with Harry sharing a charge with Ron, Hermione and Ginny who had rejoined them just before they got off the train.

When they entered the hall it was to be greeted by Silvenestri now gowned in a long black dress. Her hair was still tied back in a ponytail and her eyes sparkled. Just by looking into those silvery blue eyes told them that she was alright and the way that she ran to Harry told them that she just wanted to be with Harry again.

Harry smiled at her and crouched down, holding his arms out wide to her as Silvenestri ran up to him and hugged him. With a gentle squeeze he picked her up. "There, Little One. Are you feeling better now?" Harry said with Silvenestri in his arms as the five of them entered the Great Hall.

Silvenestri nodded with a dazzling grin and let Harry carry her to where he and the others were going to be seated for the dinner. "I'm fine now, Harry. Just very, very hungry," she said sitting on Harry's left while Hermione and Ron was on his right. /I shed an awful lot of scales too, so I feel much, much better. /

Harry nodded and looked up at the head table to see Professor Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall talking to each other. The potion's teacher, Professor Snape was looking at Harry and Silvenestri with a raised eyebrow while all of the other professors just talked amongst themselves.

It actually felt good to be back at Hogwarts.

Just then McGonagall stood up and left the room and Harry knew that she had gone to get the first year students. Hagrid walked into the Great Hall from one of the side doors and a quick look around the room showed him Harry and he raised a shaggy eyebrow at the silver haired girl seated next to him. Harry was thankful that that raised eyebrow was all the attention Hagrid offered in so public a place and watched as Hagrid settled into his chair. After a moment Professor McGonagall returned with the first years and the sorting ceremony began.

It was a good half an hour later before all the first years were sorted and seated at their tables but the Sorting Hat was still in the hall when Dumbledore rose to his feet at the head table. "Now we have one last person to sort and she is already sitting at a table, so if she would be so kind come forward." he said, turning his head and looking at the silver haired girl sitting next to Harry.

Silvenestri grasped Harry's and buried her head in his sleeve, aware of all of the eyes looking at her. After a moment Harry got to his feet and helped Silvenestri to hers and with a gentle caress of her hair he led the way to where the sorting hat was sitting on its stool.

‘What is he doing? Has the spell broken? Silvenestri was to stay with me or that is what I told his memories of what was going to happen. He was to recall that he had agreed to her staying with me. If he has broken the spell... or has he broken only a part of it? Perhaps he is hoping the hat will tell him about Silvenestri?’ Harry was careful to contain his scowl as he lifted Silvenestri onto the stool and then took the hat from McGonagall’s hand.

Silvenestri looked nervously at Harry but he smiled reassuring at her and so did the strange elderly lady standing beside him, so she settled and waited. Harry placed the hat and grinned as the hat slipped down, her head vanishing under its beaten and battered form. He then stepped to one side and while the whole school waited he let his mind join with Silvenestri's for this important sorting.

[illegible]

## Silvenestri mind

Harry felt a moment of disorientation and opened his eyes. The great silver form of Silvenstri, her new scales gleaming stood before the images of four people. His eyes widened as he recognised the people standing before his friend. He had seen their portraits and he had no doubt that they faced now the four founders of Hogwarts who were looking Silvenstri over with great interest.

He looked quickly about him and realised that he appeared to be standing within the Great Hall and that somehow the Sorting Hat was responsible for the appearance of the Hall and the Founders.

Harry walked over towards Silvenestri and as he walked he brought to his mind the image of his armour and cloak. He was a Dragon Lord and Silvenestri was his responsibility and he was not going to leave her to face these four without him. He was not afraid of these people and he had been taught that the Dragon Lords bent their knee to no one.

"You know you can just place her with me." He ran a hand over Silvenestri's nose and turned to look at the four founders with a smile.

Godric and Salazar, both white haired and dressed in ancient styled robes, the colours matching their individual house colours looked at Harry with their shock clearly evident. They had not expected to find themselves facing a Greater Dragon nor her rider, nor for that matter, had they expected to be summoned by the hat at all. Rowena, slender with black hair and golden eyes, dressed in a deep blue robe surveyed the dragon and the young man and seemed to smile at Harry though her lips did not move. Helga kept an expressionless face as she ran a hand absently through her blond hair and her blue eyes surveyed the dragon with interest. Her black robes hid her figure unlike Rowena's deep blue robes.

"And what are you doing here, Mr Potter?" Salazar said walking ahead of the others, his hair and beard trimmed closer to his head unlike Godric's flowing beard that was as long as Dumbledore's.

'They know me because of my Sorting and because I used the Sword of Gryffendor.' Harry thought. "I would have thought that that would be obvious to you Salazar. Silvenestri is my friend, my bonded. I would like a say in where she goes especially as I did not want her to be sorted." Harry ran a hand over her nose gently.

Rowena considered the young man and the dragon that almost purred under his ministrations and stepped forward to stop Salazar from saying anything. "I take it that you, Harry, are the last Dragon Lord? It was you that left that message there for us to find?" She said

her voice gentle and easy on the ears but there was an undertone of steel that brought to mind Professor McGonagall.

Harry nodded then stepped forward, away from the dragon to stand in front of the founders and giving them all a slight bowing of his head. "Well then, where were you planing to placing her before I got here?" he said his hands resting on his hips.

Rowena answered him before anyone else could, moving closer to the dragon and the armoured figure. She motioned to the others to hold their peace for the moment, recalling how in her long ago days of youth she had had a crush on the legend of the last Dragon Lord. She could not say that she was disappointed either. Harry looked quite stunning in his armour and magical cloak.

"We were not exactly expecting to need to sort a dragon, my dear. However, it seems that we must, and that is what we were discussing when you decided to join us. The problem is, of course, that your friend meets the qualifications for all four houses. She has the cunning of Slytherin, the bravery of Gryffindor, the intelligence required for my own house and the loyalty of Hufflepuff. She has all of these things and we can not quite decide in which house to place her." Rowena said, lowering her head a little and watching Harry closely, waiting for him to say something.

Harry bit his lower lip and looked at the founders. Salazar was looking rather hungrily at Silvenestri and no doubt thinking of her power. Godric was looking at her and he could almost see him thinking of the bravery that she was capable of and the honour she might bring to Gryffindor. He met Helga's gaze and saw that she was simply watching him and waiting for him to do something. What it was she expected of him he had no idea and then he noted that Rowena too was simply looking at him. He resisted the urge to squirm under those knowing looks. They obviously thought that he was going to come up with some bright and all satisfying solution to their problem.

What was he to do? If he chose one over all the others he was likely to get a lightening charm up the butt... or worse. He looked again at the waiting founders and then at Silvanestri who had reared back to sit on her haunches and watch the proceedings with wide eyes. Eyes

that held a remarkable amount of intelligence and wisdom considering her age.

Drawing a deep breath Harry faced the founders and reached back to rest a hand on Silvenestri's foreleg. "I believe that the only one who should make this decision is the one it will affect the most. I know that she is young but it is her life to lead as she sees best. I can tell her what is best for her but that would be my decision, not hers and she will have to live with that choice. The decision is Silvenestri's to make and I trust her to make the right one." With a light caress to that silver scaled leg Harry walked over to the join the founders and stood next to Rowena, giving her a small nod.

Rowena nodded back at Harry for both his choice and respecting his wisdom for letting Silvenestri decide before she placed a hand on his shoulder. All five, Harry and the founders of Hogwarts looked at the silver dragon facing them.

“You would have done well in my house, Harry,” she said in a low voice.

Harry nodded slightly and fought a losing battle against a blush and turned his attention to Silvenestri. The dragon looked from one to the other and raised a claw to scratch at her chin. "I will remain with my friend not because of my bravery, but because of my loyalty to him." she said. A beaming smile broke out on the face of the obviously happy Godric and the dragon nodded her head at the slight nod of approval from Helga.

Rowena in turn nodded her approval of the choice and then looked at Harry. "You have a good friend there, Harry." About them the founders began to fade and Rowena lightly touched his shoulder. "Can you look after my descendent for me? She is the last of my line and she is not as strong as she looks. Do feel free to visit me anytime that you wish. My essence lies within Hogwarts on the same floor as your symbol." The last words were like a breath of wind as Harry and Silvenestri opened their eyes and the Sorting Hat was removed from Silvenestri head.

[illegible]

## The Great Hall

Harry opened his eyes in time to see Professor McGonagall take the hat from Silvenestri head and to hear the Gryffindor's clapping loudly. Obviously the Sorting Hat had announced to the entire school that Silvenestri was to enter Gryffindor and Harry looked down at his new watch that Tonks had given him to see that the Sorting of Silvenestri had taken all of 10 minutes.

He picked up Silvenestri and with a nod to Professor McGonagall he walked over to where he had been sitting before. Dumbledore rose at the high table and clapped his hands together once to gain attention.

"Now before we eat I will explain to you why Silvenestri was sorted and why she is here considering that she is only five years old. Her guardian is Harry Potter and he was unwilling to let anyone look after her other than himself. A deal was made between Harry and myself that she would be allowed to come with him to the school and go to all of his classes. Of course considering the level of magic that is being studied at Hogwarts this year by Harry, she has to remain quiet and must not interfere with his studies. As to the Sorting of her... Well let us say that she is a student of this school, as much a student at Hogwarts as are you all. Her lessons are just slightly delayed." He paused then clapped his hands, and the food appeared. "Now. Let the feast begin!"

Harry looked around at the others as Ron packed his plate with his usual gusto and started to eat as fast as he could. Hermione was taking small bites of her much smaller meal, as was Ginny, both eating with the decorum one would expect from a lady. He looked at Silvenestri who was stacking her plate with beef and pork. He reached to lightly touch her shoulder and inclined his head to a big platter of vegetables.

"Still feeling a little upset sweetie?" Harry asked as she began shovelling her meat into her mouth using a fork and not touching her knife to cut the slices into more manageable pieces.

Silvenestri scowled and then grinned, nodded and kept eating at a far slower pace than was her usual habit. Every now and then she would

look at Ron who was eating almost as greedily as Dudley but not as fast or thankfully not with as much in his mouth at once.

/Too well done. Anyone would think that he was a dragon. He'll be as big a porker as the Dudley brat if he keeps eating like that. /

Harry stifled a laugh and began to fill his own plate and became aware of Hermione watching Silvenestri. "Something wrong?"

"Harry aren't you going to get her to eat some vegetables or fruit? A growing girl needs those things." She said dodging an impromptu food shower as Ron asked the same question nearly showering her with his dinner.

Harry looked at Silvenestri and then Hermione and shrugged slightly, offering a napkin to Ron to clean up his mess. "I should and normally I will, but she is still a little sick so I'll let her decide what goes into her mouth. I am trusting her not to over eat or eat something that is going to disagree with her." Harry said to Hermione with a pointed look at Silvenestri who gave her plate a considering look and began to eat again, this time at an even slower rate. Harry nodded, satisfied and then went back to his meal.

The rest of the dinner passed quietly with much laughing and talking and questions about who had been doing what over summer. Dumbledore rose to his feet as the noise in the hall began to ease as stomachs filled and people began to run out of questions. It was getting late and he clapped to gain their attention and addressed the school.

"A few announcements before we retire for the night. Now the standard rules of course are that the forest is forbidden and Mr Filch would like me to remind you that magic is not to be used in the halls. The list of things forbidden in the school has grown. The full list is posted in the outer hall and can also be attained in Mr Filches office. I would like to welcome back to Hogwarts Professor Lupin who has agreed to once again become our Dark Arts Teacher. For those of you who might be concerned about his problems we are taking every precaution to ensure that you are safe. Also I would like to thank Tonks and Mad-Eye Moody for coming to Hogwarts. They will be here to teach anyone who wishes to learn to fight Voldemort or simply



to learn to defend them self after leaving school. These lessons will be held in conjunction with Defence Against the Dark Arts classes. Also as we now have a young child here at Hogwarts I wish to suggest to you all that should she break the rules you should hand her to her guardian for any appropriate punishments that might be required. Now off to bed with you. Harry would you and Silvenestri see your head of house now and do bring Miss Granger with you."

Harry rose to his feet and after taking Silvenestri by the hand and walked up to the head table with Hermione right behind him. Ron walked the first year students to the Gryffindor common room and waved slightly to Harry and Hermione as he led the students away.

When Harry and Hermione arrived at the head table most of the staff had left for the night but Professor McGonagall was still there as was Dumbledore and Tonks. Both talking with Minerva and all three looked up as they stopped at the table, Harry still holding Silvenestri's hand with Hermione standing on the other side of him. "You wanted to see me Professor?"

"Yes, Harry. We can't have Silvenestri in the boy's dorm rooms so if you are willing I thought that Miss Granger could look after her in the girl's rooms at night. Would that be acceptable to you Harry, Miss Granger?"

Harry looked at Hermione to see how she was taking this, expecting her to object, but to his surprise she actually looked quite pleased. She was looking after Silvenestri with a large smile on her face.

"I don't see why not but can I say one thing?" After Professor McGonagall nodded Harry continued. "Could you tell me where Tonks's room? Silvenestri and Tonks became very close over the summer, like sisters. Before you say anything about me knowing where she will be it is because I can't get up to the girl's room if anything should happen. Knowing where Tonks is would be a good idea because she would be willing to help if it was needed." Harry said looking his transfiguration professor in the eye.

Minerva considered the request and the reasoning and then looked over at Tonks to see how she was with this only to see that Tonks had moved over to Silvenestri and was cuddling her, talking to her

softly. They did look much like sisters. "Well, I don't see why not. She is staying in the spare room just down from your common room door Harry. The painting of an old witch with a hawk on her shoulder is the door. Now it is late. Off to bed with you all."

Harry nodded and led the way with Hermione just behind him and Tonks and Silvenestri bringing up the rear and talking about the upcoming school year.

They arrived at Tonks's room first, at the painting of an old witch with a brown hawk on her shoulder and Tonks gave the password and told Harry and Hermione what it was. With a final caress to Silvenestri's hair she bid them both a good night.

Harry walked up to the fat lady and looked to Hermione for the password. Hermione was a Prefect and would know it and no one had told him as yet what it was. Silvenestri stood right behind him looking at the painting with her head tilted to one side in most endearing fashion.

Hermione nodded and looked to the waiting Fat Lady and said "Dragon" and the portrait open to show the common room.

Walking in Harry found that most of the house had already gone to bed. All of Harry's 6th form and some of the 5th years as well lingered in the common room.

"What? ... Why are you still up?" Harry said but got his answer when all of the girls there managed to get to Silvenestri and started to dote on her. Cries of how cute she was and what she would look like in other dresses and how lovely she looked in that dress sent a shock of pure terror through him. "Never mind." Harry almost ran over to where Ron and Neville were sitting with the other boys from his year. "Hey guys. Ah, by chance could you save Silvenestri from that horde of girls?"

Wide disbelieving eyes glared at Harry and Ron shook his head in a emphatic 'no' and was about to answer Harry when a scream of fear ripped through the room. Before he could turn Harry had Silvenestri warped around his chest and shacking like a leaf. He looked up to

see most of the girls looking rather put out by Silvenestri screaming at them but Hermione didn't look at all surprised.

Hermione waved at Harry and moved between the girls and the little girl clinging to him. "I think you all see and understand after this that she is obvious not use to large groups. Harry is a security blanket if she gets scarred. We will work on her slowly. Now all of you to bed. Lavender you can see her later since Silvenestri is staying with us." Hermione said to Lavender who was looking a little hurt that Silvenestri was scared of her. All of the girls who had been looking concerned and stunned now broke into smiles and nodded to each other after hearing this and began to file into the girls dorms.

Harry nodded his thanks to Hermione before looking down at Silvenestri and started to rub her back and calm her down. / It's ok, Sweetling. They were just trying to be your friend. I need to know if you can hold this form until after breakfast. Can you do that or not? / Harry thought to her while Hermione and Ron sat back and waited for Harry to calm her down.

/ I think I can but I will have to go to the cave right after breakfast. I need to reset the spell and my form but that will only take half an hour tops. / She sent back while her body cuddled comfortably into Harry and she sat on Harry's lap, her head resting on his shoulder.

Harry smiled at her then looked at Hermione. "Thank you for that. I was afraid something like this might happen because Silvenestri has not been around this many people. Even back at her old home she was left alone and had very few friends from what she has told me."

Hermione nodded understandingly after a few minutes she rose to her feet and offered to take the now sleeping little girl from Harry's arms to bed. She could not help looking at Harry and thinking that so much about him had changed. More surely than merely acquiring a little girl could accomplish.

Harry nodded and carefully handed Silvenestri over and with Ron behind him he walked up to the boy's dorm room and to his bed hoping that Silvenestri was right about being able to hold her form.

Hermione looked at the silver haired child asleep in her arms and sighed softly. "I think that there is more to you than meets the eye." Then being careful she walked up to the dorm and started to get ready for a good nights sleep. While she changed Lavender gently changed Silvanestri to pyjamas and settled her to bed. Both girls smiled at the sleeping child and tumbled into bed themselves.

[illegible]

## Dumbledore's office

Albus Dumbledore was sitting in his chair in his office looking at the Sorting Hat with a look of utter exasperation. He had been trying for some time now to get the hat to tell him about this child that Harry had taken under his wing.

“Come on. Tell me about this child. I know that you know about her, it is in your very nature to sense these things and I must know if she is a threat to Harry.” He argued, pulling gently at his beard, a habit he had lost a great many years ago but which had made a come back recently.

The Hat made a somewhat unusual noise, a cross between a blown raspberry and a muffled cough and then plainly huffed at the Professor. "The child is no threat Dumbledore now leave me alone. I need my beauty sleep. You do too." Again that odd noise issued from the hat and this time when it spoke it had the dulcet tones of Rowena Ravenclaw. "Give it a rest, Albus. We are trying to sleep in here."

Dumbledore snorted in a most insulted fashion and went up to his room leaving the hat on his desk where he would tackle it again in the morning.

What Dumbledore didn't see was the image of Rowena emerge from the hat and look around the room at the sleeping headmasters in their paintings. "You are far too nosy for your own good Albus but you will simply have to learn to mind your own business." The image vanished then and the hat slumped back down on the desk.

“I heard that!” boomed Dumbledore with a grin

“Good!”

[illegible]

Thanks to the following reviews.

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## Chapter 12: First Day and Secrets Between Us.

/ Telepathic /

02 September 1996, 06:00 PM A.D

Harry was up before any one else in his dorm room the next morning.

'Note to self. Make Tonks pay for waking me up early over the summer.' He thought while getting dressed in his school robes being careful not to wake the others in the room. He wanted to keep the changes to his body hidden as long as possible and his school robes certainly hid the development the training he had gone through had caused. Dressed he slipped quietly from the dorm.

Entering the common room Harry just had to smile as he saw Hermione sitting there with Silvenestri snuggled in her lap. Hermione was reading Hogwarts: A History to her. With out noticing him Harry watched and listened for a few minutes before walking up behind them. Absently he brushed his hair from his eyes. He had allowed it to grow until it fell around his shoulder and usually tied it back but had not this morning.

Hermione looked up and smiled when Harry sat in the chair across from her and Silvenestri. 'He needs a hair cut but then again he does look cute with long hair.' She thought. "Morning Harry I thought I was the only one who ever got up this early in the morning but now it looks like I have two early birds to talk to." She finished letting Silvenestri out of her arms.

Harry smiled and held his arms open for Silvenestri who walked up and crowed into his lap dressed in a blue dress with silver trim and her hair pulled neatly into a braid. "Well get use to it Hermione because thanks to Tonks training I'm up with the crows. Anyway how was Silvenestri last night?"

"Fine, once Lavender and the other had left her alone and got to sleep. She did move around a lot. By any chance did you sleep near her back home, Harry?" Hermione asked while looking at the little girl cuddled in Harry's arms while her mind tried to work out who she

might actually be and why Harry had changed so much over the summer.

Harry nodded and got to his feet. "Yes, I did. Care to join us for breakfast?" Harry said, getting Silvenestri to walk over to the portrait and out of the common room to wait for him before heading down to the Great Hall.

Hermione nodded and followed Harry out the door and down the hall Silvenestri right in front of them almost bouncing with every step. He was pleased that she looked happy.

The Great Hall was almost empty except for some professors who were doing last minute work for classes at the head table. Harry led the way to the Gryffindor table and quickly settled on what he wanted for breakfast, filling a plate quickly with bacon and eggs and setting to one side some waffles. Hermione chose much the same but opted for some fresh fruit instead of the waffles. Silvenestri piled bacon high on her plate and seeing Hermione's attention on her and in particular on her plate, added some hash browns as which seemed to make Hermione happy. Harry and Hermione settled to eat breakfast while Silvenestri dove into her meal. Table talk consisted of Hermione telling Harry about her summer and Harry giving her a heavily edited version of his. They finished up breakfast with what they hope the new school year might be like.

Harry and Hermione had finished before Silvenestri and amused themselves with watching just how neatly but quickly the small girl could tuck away such a huge plate of bacon. She had just finished the last of her hash browns when some of the other students began to wander in and have breakfast, amongst them was Ron who joined them.

Silvenestri the moment she had finished off her bacon looked to Harry and said in her small voice, her eyes almost looking into his soul and he could see the dare there to deny her. "Can I go out and look at the grounds Harry?"

Harry nodded and looked to Hermione when she handed him his timetable for the year. Harry quickly scanned his table to see that he had the morning off followed by D.A.D.A and Potions for the day.

“Well, it looks like I get to give Silvenestri a tour of the school. What about you, Hermione?” Harry queried, glancing at his bushy haired friend.

Hermione nodded. “Well, Harry, we have the same timetable since I am hoping to get into the Auror Academy like you. So what will we show her first?” She smiled at Harry happy that he had passed everything subject that he need to begin his training for the Auror Academy.

Ron, who had been listening while he worked on a plate of bacon eggs and hash brown even larger that the one Silvanestri had had just grunted. His first class was Care of Magical Creatures as he had decided that he would be some form of beast tamer like his brother Charley. He had decided, however, that he would not be studying and taming Dragons like his brother considering the fact that they were just too scary to deal with. There were two creatures he wanted nothing to do with, those being Dragons and Spiders of any size.

Harry nodded to Hermione and as he stood he looked at Ron and grinned. “Don’t worry, Ron. I won’t try anything with Hermione while you’re in class. We have Silvenestri to chaperone us. See you at D.A.D.A, ok?”

Ron nodded his mouth full of bacon as he watched Harry and Hermione leave the hall and he turned again to his meal. Harry and Hermione hurried from the Great Hall in search of Silvenestri who had run from the hall while they had been talking, discussing their classes and how Hermione was looking forward to D.A.D.A. Both were eager to see what Professor Lupin had planed for their first day.

They had just left the hall when a massive roar rang out across the grounds followed by the thunder of heavy horse’s hooves a moment later. Hermione looked at Harry with wide eyes to see if he might have any idea what could caused all of that commotion in the Forbidden Forest only to see he had a smile on his face and see his lips move slightly. With the thunder of centaur hooves she was certain that she had heard wrong.

“Silvenestri, play nice.” Harry murmured under his breath as he gathered his hair back into a tail and secured it.



“Harry? Do you know what caused that?” Hermione said as she watched Hagrid stomp out of his hut and head into the forest. ‘I... I must have heard him wrong.’

Harry shook his head and led the way to the lake with Hermione right behind him. ‘I am going to have to tell her about Silvenestri but then, I was going to. Just not this soon.’ Harry sighed and motioned for Hermione to sit beside him as he found a couple of rocks just the right size for them to use as seats.

“Harry?” Hermione queried but Harry stared hard out over the lake and with a sigh Hermione waited, though she looked around anxiously for Silvanestri. “Harry, shouldn’t we be looking for Silvanestri? Does she know not to go near the forbidden forest?”

Harry shrugged his shoulders, his eyes scanning the forest line for any sign of Hagrid and waiting in silence. Hermione scowled but remained seated, watching anxiously for a glimpse of the little girl.

Hermione and Harry were on their feet in an instant when Hagrid came out of the forest with a very strange look on his face. He glanced over his shoulder at the forest repeatedly as he stalked toward the castle and he barely acknowledged their presence when they joined him.

“Hey Hagrid, what was it that made that sound?” Hermione asked.

“I don’t know for sure, but it did sound like a dragon and a big one at that. I’ll be ask’in Dumbledore to let me bring in Charley Weasley to catch it and then take it off to Romania to a proper dragon home.” Hagrid said then left them for his breakfast.

Hermione looked at Harry who was looking rather upset about this “Harry? Why would you be upset about that? It’s for the Dragon’s own safety.” she said placing a hand on his upper arm, noticing the rock hard muscle and considered how well his robes now were filled out. Harry drew her down to sit and sat beside her on a wide boulder. ‘Well, he is hiding some things for certain and I wonder if he is hiding anything else?’

“Hermione what do you know about the Dragon Lords and their dragons?” Harry questioned looking her right in the eyes and allowing the power he had been hiding after his seven years in a past time to show.

“Dragon Lords? I know that they are a myth. They never existed.” At the strange look in his eyes Hermione shrugged ever so slightly. “I mean, how could they control dragons? How could anyone control a dragon? They are the most powerful creatures physically and they are filled with a magical energy beyond any human’s capacity to handle, according to legend. Why did you want to know?” Hermione kept eye contact with Harry and seeing the power there that caused a shiver to run up her spine. If this were not Harry she knew that she would be afraid of him.

“What if I told you that all you have read about Dragons Lords... well, most of it... was true and that I can prove it to you?” Harry said looking at Hermione but after a moment he got to his feet and helped Hermione to her feet as well.

“True? Harry, some of the things I’ve read about Dragon Lords would curl your hair. Alright then. I would say prove it to me and then I’ll have to believe you.” Hermione returned.

With a rather grim smile Harry started to walk toward the Forbidden Forest almost dragging Hermione behind him. “Harry! What are you doing? We can’t enter there! I mean the Centaurs are attacking anyone who enters and then there is that spider thingy you and Ron told me about meeting in there and now there is this Dragon Hagrid thinks is in there.” She tried pulling free but Harry retained a strong grip and pulled her to the edge of the forest. Hermione glanced at the towering trees and the dark and spooky interior opening before her and baulked, digging her heels into the ground. “Harry!”

Harry looked over his shoulder and for a moment it looked like he was going to listen to her protests but with a slight shake of his head he pull out his wand and rapidly reeled off a summoning charm. Hermione’s eyes widened at the fluency of that charm as it rolled off of Harry’s tongue. He had never seemed so comfortable with using magic and he exuded confidence. There was nothing flippant or

exaggerated in his action, he performed the magical summons with quiet confidence and a moment later the silver cloak he had been wearing the other day came flying out of the castle and sped over to Harry who caught it mid air.

"It's alright, Hermione. Trust me. We can enter the forest safely. Just stay close ok?" he said looking at Hermione his eyes telling her to trust him.

Hermione nodded after a moment, recalling the past years at Hogwarts when they had done more dangerous things than enter the Forbidden Forest in broad daylight. She would trust Harry for now but she would keep her wand close to her hand. Harry spun the cloak in the air and it almost seemed to wrap itself around him, the silver material glinting in the light as he stepped into the first line of trees and it was then that Hermione noticed the runes on the hem of the cloak.

'Silver cloak. Runes... It can't be... but... What if it is? Is it the same cloak? It has to be! The same cloak as they said that man who destroyed the portal under the ministry wore. The portal that took Sirius.'

Hermione was so caught up in her thoughts that she didn't at first notice how far they had come into the forest until the dim light darkened Harry's cloak to grey. She looked at Harry to see that he was walking alone an old path that was so heavily overgrown that it was barely recognisable as being a path. It was only recognisable as a trail because someone had walked it fairly recently although the broken twigs and branches of the undergrowth suggested it had been some weeks. He walked the path with his hand extended out before him and a soft light emitted from the palm. Why he did so puzzled her as it was not enough light to light their way but he looked serious and he was obviously concentrating on what he was doing.

"What are you doing?"

"Keeping unwanted company away. It is a ward. A minor one but enough to keep unwanted company from bothering us."

Hermione looked into the darkness of the forest and then at Harry. He had not use a wand in whatever magic he was using but it certainly seemed to be working. She really needed to know what he had been up to over the summer.

Harry keep on walking, following the suggestion of a path for some 10 minutes or so before coming to a stop to look at a thicket of bushes before him. "Well that's new." He murmured. "Still, after so long what could one expect? No, not natural bushes. I can feel the magic. Conjured then. Alright, lets get rid of those to begin with." Waving his hand he conjured a dark rune to hover in the air and whispering the key word to focus and release the spell the bushes vanished.

For an instant Hermione glimpsed a flashing light, too quickly to discern the exact shape and then it was gone and so was the screen of bushes blocking the path. She was eyeing Harry with rather a deep frown, concerned that he seemed to be casually using what felt like rather powerful magic and she had not seen him use his wand, but surely he must have? No one could use magic without a wand to focus. Could they?

They kept walking for another 10 minutes or so before reaching a clearing where a low overhang shadowed the mouth of a cave to one side. Close to where they emerged from the forest, next to the cave was a depression in the ground with the grass within it looking to be flattened recently. The sun streamed through the trees in this location and the bright light glinted on numerous silver 'somethings' half hidden in the long grass that appeared to have been near crushed beneath a considerable weight.

"Harry? Where's this proof you were going to show me? What's down there? It shines like metal. Let me go so that I can have a look." Hermione was staring into the depression at the glinting silver reflecting the sun's light, keeping her wand close at hand. She looked around the clearing trying to work out what Harry was intending to show her.

"Hunting." Harry tartly commented.

He settled his thoughts and extended his mind in searching tendrils, looking for Silvenestri's thoughts. He knew that she was out in the

woods, hunting and he needed to know where and how far away she was.

/ You have found something that you consider worthy of your skills yet? I have class in an hour! / Harry sent to Silvenstri after touching her mind and finding her to be quite close by.

/ I'll be there in a moment, this thing just won't die. Stupid thing. Honestly, it has no brain. I've gutted it Harry and its entrails are leaking all over the place and its bleeding all over the clearing and just won't lay down and die! / The sound of tree branches snapping like twigs rang out from somewhere on the other side of the clearing, the source hidden by the thick undergrowth and a fringe of trees.

Hermione's head snapped up at the sound and she took a reflexive step backwards as a large monster came flying out of the woods. Her eyes widened and her jaw worked but no sound emerged. It was the size of a large horse with a thick coat of brown fur covering it. The creature looked like a bear but the face was all wrong as instead of a snout it had the beak and eyes of an oversized owl. As it turned in a flurry of blood and gore Hermione saw that its back and forearms were cloaked in brown feathers. The creature staggered but faced the thicket from which it had come, seemingly not to notice the great gash in its belly. With a half grunt, half growl the creature toppled over twitched a few times and then lay still.

Hermione looked at the monster with shock, eyes wide in disbelief at seeing a creature that she had only read about before now. Nor would she have wanted to meet the beast as it had a very nasty reputation. "An Owlbear! That's an Owlbear! Harry, this is... but they are nearly impossible to kill! What could have caused that much damage to a creature like that? What could have done this?" She stared in dread at the dead body in front of them, her eyes wide in fright at one of the more powerful monsters of the magical world killed before her.

Harry looked at the creature, considering its size and ferocity. He knew something about Owlbears from one of Hagrid's classes and he was rather surprised by his friend's choice of prey. He whistled softly and then looked up at the sky above the tree line from which the

creature had come. "Silvenestri! Isn't it a little big for you to be taking on?" he called out.

Beside him Hermione looked at him as though he was crazy. "Harry? Don't be ridiculous. How could a little girl lik..." Hermione stopped mid word as Silvenestri in her true form came out of the woods from where the Owlbear had fled, gliding gracefully through the thick undergrowth as though it was not there. The sun glinted on her silver hide reflecting the early morning light brilliantly. "Dragon! Harry, run! We have to get away from here! We have to reach Hagrid before we are noticed! No. The school's too far away. We need something closer!" Unnatural fear was reflected in her voice as she spun in a circle, looking desperately for cover and then taking off into the cave so conveniently at hand. "Dragon, Harry! She...He... It's a dragon!"

Harry blinked in surprise as the normally level headed Hermione bolted for the cave. He shrugged slightly. 'Guess the dragon fear's started. That will please Silvenestri, I suppose.' He mused and looked at Silvenestri who was posing proudly over her kill, licking the beasts bloodied belly and then raised her blood smeared head to smirk a very self satisfied smirk at Harry.

"Mine." she purred, a velvety deep rumble.

"Yes, dear. All yours. Eat up now and enjoy." Harry nodded for her to eat before walking over to the cave. He checked the dragon before he entered the mouth of the cave to ensure that Silvenestri was eating her kill, which she was doing in typical draconic neatness, pausing to pluck the feathers from the side of her mouth between bites. "Hermione! Are you ok?" Harry called.

When no answer was forthcoming Harry sighed and entered the cave, knowing that it was not very deep. He expected to find her in the second chamber, where he had made and stored his equipment so long ago and sure enough, he found her in the back of the second smaller cave.

"Hermione, it's okay. The dragon is Silvenestri. She won't hurt you. I did not realise the dragon fear was awakening, but it's only mild just now. Nothing like it will be when she gets older. It is only Silvenestri

though, whether she is a little girl or a little dragon, she is still the same.”

“Harry James Potter! A LITTLE DRAGON? There is no such thing as a LITTLE dragon! Only a little girl. That is NOT a little girl! How can you say that? She is a damn dragon. A killer! You know that dragons kill people, don’t you?” Hermione’s tirade began to wind down as she ran short of breath but it did not silence her completely. “How come she has not killed you and everyone else she has met? I don’t understand, Harry. I don’t understand what is going on.” Harry could see the fear in her eyes but now there was at least a light of reason dawning there. It was a hope that Harry could and would tell her what was happening which told him that she was recovering from the dragon fear.

Harry looked at Hermione and tried to keep the anger from his voice. He had been warned about the effects that maturing dragons had on people not bonded to the beasts and he just had to have patience and deal with it as best he could.

“Hermione, settle down. There is no danger. I told you that I could prove the Dragons Lords did exist and now you have that evidence. Silvenestri is that proof.” His voice softened but his eyes still said that he was a little upset that Hermione didn’t trust him as much as he had thought she should.

Hermione backed up a little seeing Harry’s anger but she managed to calm herself. “How does this prove that the Dragon Lords existed? A dragon does not prove anything.” She said keeping an eye on the cave mouth where the sound of flesh being torn and bones being crunched echoed.

Harry too caught the sounds of a draconic meal being thoroughly enjoyed. The crunch of bone and the tearing of flesh did not cause him to so much as flinch as it did Hermione. To him it was proof that his bond mate was healthy and happily feeding as did the rhythmic purring that occasionally filtered into the cave. He glanced at the table to one side of Hermione and sighed. If he had a light source he could merely show her the armour laid out on the table, the armour that he himself had crafted, but it was not the armour he wanted to convince

her of. He needed to ensure that she knew Silvenestri could be trusted not to eat his friends.

His anger forgotten and his hope that Hermione did trust him now renewed by her willingness to talk to him instead of losing her head completely Harry sighed. "Hermione do you trust me enough to go out there and listen? I can tell you about the Last Dragon Lord. Silvenestri can tell you about the Last Dragon Lord and the last of the Great Dragons. Will you trust me?"

Hermione looked at Harry and she could see that he did want her to go with him and to trust him. All of the long silences about what he had been doing through the summer holidays now reared in her mind and she guessed that he was about to fill in the gaps in his summer holidays. "Ok Harry. I'll do it, but on one condition. I'll go outside but not until she has finish eating." She said looking through the darkness at the faintly lighter area that marked the distant entrance to the cave.

Harry nodded, realised that Hermione could not see the gesture and reached out to take her arm, leading her through the cave. He left her in the main cavern and walked out to see that Silvenestri was curled asleep in the hollowed out depression, the grass flattened down around her and her head pointed at the cave, one eye's outer lid open while the second lid was closed.

"It's ok, Hermione she is done and settled down, sleeping now. Besides, she says humans would be too stringy and tough to make a decent meal of and the lesser dragons are just plain savages. Come out with me so that we can talk and remember that Silvenestri would never hurt you. You were not afraid of her last night, were you? She is just a little girl, you know." Harry said offering a hand to Hermione.

After walking outside the first thing Hermione looked for was Silvenestri who was, as Harry had said, fast asleep. There was not a bit of blood, guts or gore visible either in the grass or on the dragon to show that she had eaten not long ago 'Well, least she's neat.' She thought. "Ok Harry. What didn't you tell Ron and I on the train?" She settled down on one of the rocks out front of the cave, squarely facing the dragon, not willing to turn her back on the beast and looking at



Harry, glancing every few seconds at the Silver Dragon across from her.

Harry nodded and sat next to Silvenestri who was asleep and starting to set up a low rumbling purr of content as he absently stroked her neck. Taking a deep breath he began, telling Hermione all about his mothers gifts to him and where he had gone for what amounted to 7 years for him and 7 hours for everyone else and concluding with what had happen at the Ministry. By the time he was done Silvenestri was awake and listening to Harry. Mid way through the tale she had woken and wrapped her forelegs around him loosely, protectively encasing him in the shelter of her claws while keeping an eye on Hermione.

Hermione listened in amazement, wondering if she dared believe this wild tale, but dare she not believe? After all, the proof was here, before her. A huge silver dragon the likes of which had not walked the earth for millennium now lay before her. She looked at Silvenestri and then at Harry with a low sigh. "Ok. I take back what I said about her. She certainly is not what I am used to in a dragon, but why did you tell me and on one else?"

Harry looked at Silvenestri who raised her head and chose to answer Hermione's question. "You are not the first human of this time to see me Hermione. Tonks has known for a month now and Professor Dumbledore did know but his mind has been altered so that he would not remember me. Besides you would have found out I am what I am sooner or later, so why not now?" she said lowering her head closer to Hermione but keeping sufficient distance to avoid the girl becoming upset again until she got use to her.

Hermione looked at Harry who was leaning on Silvenestri's front leg, absently rubbing at scales which were slouching off to reveal the gleam of brighter scales beneath, then glanced back at Silvenestri who was waiting patiently for her to say something. "So why did Tonks find out before anyone else? Even Dumbledore?"

Harry answered her this time with rather a self-conscious smile. "Well, you know how I told you that Tonks has been living with me for a month now? What I didn't tell you is that we have been sleeping

together for the last 3 weeks that she has been living there and we have only just....” He paused and then smiled at Hermione, a huge grin, very pleased with himself. “Taken to having bouts of midnight madness...” at Hermione’s confused look Harry sighed. “... Sex in the last three days.”

Hermione looked at Harry in shock and then in a low voice managed, "So you and Tonks have been sleeping together for three weeks? Silvenestri has know her for just as long and you have been..." she swallowed. " Having sex with a older women for the last three days." She paused for a moment then forced her smile back on her face "I'll, ahm, keep your secret Harry and I will swear that no one will know that Silvenestri is a dragon from me. Not without you telling them first and I hope that you trust me enough to believe me."

Silvanestri leaned closer to Hermione and rolled her silver blue eyes and in a draconic whisper confided in her. “The sex thing is a boy thing, I think. I have been told that males go all silly where sex is concerned.”

Hermione's face turned bright red and Harry looked at the dragon in a rather dazed fashion. Draconic whispers were generally very audible indeed to anyone within fifty feet of the creature. He could not help overhearing the confidence and he blushed just as deeply as Hermione.

Choosing to ignore the dragons comment Harry nodded smiling at her before looking up at Silvenestri who was practically glowing with new strength after a fresh kill and her nap. "Well, my dear. It is time to get back to the school and my first class. Care to join us?" He smiled an even bigger smile at the silver dragon.

Silvenestri nodded and before Hermione's startled gaze she blurred and then the little girl that Hermione knew was standing there, her arms wrapped around Harry's leg. Harry had enfolded her in his arms within a heartbeat and with a large smile on her face her eyes showing the love and trust she had for Hermione and Harry she rested her head on Harry's shoulder.

[illegible]

Professor Lupin looked over his class as he entered the classroom and sighed. With a gasped apology for being late Harry and Hermione rushed past him as he moved toward his desk and he nodded absently to them. He really was rather happy to be back at Hogwarts, he was thinking, when something unusual caught his eye. A flick of light coloured hair, silver not blonde and he realised what it was that he was seeing. The silver hair of Harry's charge sitting tucked in a corner had drawn his attention, as did something else, something he could not quite place a name to and he walked over and smiled down at her. Reaching into his case he pulled a book out.

"Here you are. This should keep you amused for awhile, Little One." He handed her the book and starting to turn away he stopped.

Again that odd something bothered him. He glanced quickly about the room, scenting the crush of humanity and the dust of ages that hung about the old school room. There was something... Something that no one else seemed to have noticed. With a sigh he moved toward his desk and it was the deeper inhalation before the sigh that brought that oddity to his immediate notice. Why could he scent the lingering traces of a reptilian scent in the air?

'Reptile? Now why should I smell that? I don't have anything that smells like that in here today.' He thought looking around the room but he could not pin point the smell with so many people in the class or the lingering odour's of the past creatures that had been used in past sessions.

Lupin watched as Harry settled at a desk near the child and he walked over to his desk and looked up, fixing first Harry and then Hermione with a knowing smile. He could smell the scent of the Forbidden Forest on the pair and he wondered what they had been up to, but for now he would not ask.

"Long walk you two? Or did you just loose track of time?" He said with a smile while placing his case on the desk and taking his seat. He flipped open the satchel and pulled out his lesson notes for the day.

"Long walk." Harry panted while thinking / Not as fit as I was. / He settled into the seat with Silvenestri on his right and Hermione on his left.

Ron, seated on Hermione's other side looked at Harry and then Hermione with a raised eyebrow before taking her hand in his for a moment and giving it a gentle squeeze. With a nod to Harry he concentrated on what Lupin had to say.

Silvenestri quietly sniggered at what Harry had thought and looked back to her book that Lupin had given her. The book was about some creatures referred to as light creatures. There were some rather pretty coloured plates included which she found quite entertaining picking out the details of their surroundings. Faeries, unicorns and phoenixes gambled in a forest wonderland with bright coloured flowers in glorious profusion.

After calling the roll Lupin rose to his feet and looked the class over. "Now, class. I am sorry but your first lesson this year is going to be copying what I write on the board but I do promise that the next class I'll bring in something for you to work on. Unfortunately we do need to do some written if not practical work." Lupin waited for the groans of some of the students to subside before continuing. "Now today we are going to learn about Dragons and how they can be used in battle. Who can tell me what was the last battle where dragons were used for the main fight and not merely as scouts?" he spoke to the class but his face automatically turned, expecting to see Hermione's hand in the air. Nor was he disappointed.

Harry was the one to groan now and his head hit the table with a dull thud. Muttering something about having a headache as Hermione's hand shot up to answer the question.

"Yes, Miss Granger and do hit Mr Potter to make sure he is still alive and with us over there." Lupin said to Hermione smiling at what Harry was muttering, thankful for the benefits of a werewolf hearing.

Hermione tried not to laugh at what Lupin said about Harry and fighting a smile replied, "That would be the Battle of the Cliff, Sir, where two armies of Dragons and their tamers attacked each other over land and nesting grounds. A little over 2000 years ago, Sir."

"Correct, Miss Granger and now can you tell me why Dragons are no longer used in battles other than as scouts?" Lupin questioned,

looking at Harry who still had his head on the table but turned to one side so he could listen to what was being said.

“Because Dragons after that fight have been wild and untameable to this day. They can be controlled but not for long battles but long enough to be useful as scouts and for quick skirmishes.” Hermione answered then looked at Harry who still had his head down on the desk but whose hand was writing what she had said on a piece of parchment placed next to his head.

“Very good, Miss Granger. Ten points for Gryffindor, and now who besides you can tell me what a dragons prime weapon is?” Lupin asked while writing some of Hermione’s answers on the board.

A Hufflepuff raised her hand tentatively. “Their claws?” she said in a quiet voice, not quite trusting Lupin yet. Many of the students were going to have to get used to the idea to being taught by a werewolf.

Lupin did write that on the board but said “No, not the prime weapon, but it is true that their claws are a major weapon. Any one else?”

Another Hufflepuff raised her hand. “Tail and teeth?” her voice was also low and quiet but more because she was reserved and shy by nature, not because of any unease about Professor Lupin.

“Yes, they are weapons on a dragon but again it is not the prime weapon. Any one else?” Lupin questioned, this time making a magical image of a Hungarian Horntail with a quick wave of his wand. The illusionary dragon standing before him had the horns, teeth, tail and claws were shown in blue on its black hide. The image was slowly rotating in a circle so the class could see the entire dragon.

Harry raised a hand and when Lupin looked at him he sighed. “Their breath weapon is the prime weapon.” Harry said knowing that he was right.

“Yes, Mr Potter. That is a dragons prime weapon.” Lupin said as the area under the mouth of the image went red. “Now, who can tell me their strongest defence?” He looked at the class expectantly.

Everyone looked around to see if any one had the answer to that one but no one did or, in Harry's case, he did know but did not what to give it.

Lupin was about to tell the class what it was when Silvenestri stirred in her corner, looking up from the book she had been reading. "Their magic resistance." Her head immediately popped back into the pages of the book Lupin had given to her but one eye was looking at the werewolf turned professor from the protection of her bangs.

Lupin nodded and looked at the class after looking at Silvenestri with a raised eyebrow. He had not expected the answer to come from the child in their midst and where was that reptilian scent coming from? He caught it occasionally, wafting through the class, circulated by the myriad little drafts they could never stop in building this old.

"Now how does a five year old girl...."

"Nearly six!" Silvenestri and Harry said at the same time, smiles on their faces when they thought about how long it took to work out when Silvenestri's birthday was.

"...Know more that a bunch of 16 year olds?" Lupin finished as if Harry and Silvenestri had said nothing at all, his face trying to hide his amusement. 'So like the Weasley twins and like James and Sirius.' He thought.

Harry calmly looked at Lupin and smiled. "Well, I knew but I wanted to see if anyone else knew, Sir."

"And how did you know that Harry?" Lupin asked while writing some more notes on the board for the class to copy down.

"I learned it from some books I read over the summer, Sir Silvenestri likes stories about dragons." Harry said. Glancing around the room he could see that most of the class was copying what was being writing on the board and that no one was talking.

Lupin nodded, accepting that, pleased that some on other than Hermione appeared to have been studying over the holidays. The rest of the class passed without a problem and Harry, with his friends

right behind him and Silvenestri clinging to his arm started for the Great Hall for lunch. After lunch Harry and Hermione with Silvenestri went to Potions while Ron headed for Herbology.

[illegible]

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## Chapter 13: Potions.

/ Telepathic /

02 September 1996 13:33 PM A.D

Harry and Hermione had just arrived at the potion's class and sat down with Silvenestri right behind them when Tonks walked in and sat down next to Harry smiling at him.

"Hey lover, how has your day been?" Tonks said in a low voice that only Harry would hear as Silvenestri promptly crawled onto her lap and looked over everyone in the room.

Harry nodded and was about to answer when Professor Snape stalked into the room and greeted the 12 students in the class in his usual brusque fashion. "Welcome to N.E.W.T level potions. All of you have managed to get a O in your O.W.L's and now you have the right to learn, or try to learn, some of the most powerful potions known to man."

He looked around the room, noting the Slytherin's present, Draco at the head of the group. He then looked at the three Hufflepuff's whom Harry didn't know sitting on the far side of the Slytherin's and his gaze wandered next to the three Ravenclaw's who were sitting next to Harry and Hermione talking quietly to each other. Last was, of course, Harry and Hermione the only Gryffindor's that were willing to put up with Snape for another two years or who needed Potions to further their chosen careers.

"Ah, Mr Potter. I see you managed to get into this class. Let us see how long you can last." Snape paused then looked at the class as a whole. "Now to begin. Everyone is to make the most advance potion that you know and hand it in at the end of this class. We shall see how much you have read over the summer."

Snape took a seat at his desk as he watched everyone prepare the needed ingredients and start on their potions. All the while he was keeping a close eye on Harry, no doubt hoping that he could throw him out the first day.



Harry was careful to keep the knowing smirk from his face as he fetched some of the more basic ingredients of the potion he had decided on and started to mix them in his cauldron. He slipped in some of Silvenestri's scales that she had shed that morning being careful that Snape did not notice the addition.

"Harry what are you making?" Hermione queried while Tonks was talking softly to Silvenestri next to them.

Tonks was watching Harry and the ingredients he was mixing and he could see that she was becoming curious. She had shown him some potions over the summer but she was well aware that this was not one of them.

"Something Snape has never made before and would not even have heard of. Just keep working on yours." Harry whispered as he added the last of the palm size scales into the now silver liquid in his cauldron. The solution had the look and consistency of mercury.

Hermione just shrugged and got back to work on her potion while Tonks looked curiously at what Harry was doing after talking with Silvenestri who moved to sit at her feet and opened the book Professor Lupin had give her earlier.

Snape watched for a moment and then stirred, rising to his feet. "No coaching."

"Would not dream of it, Professor Snape." Tonks returned.

On the floor Silvenestri glanced up from her book and watched Harry and Tonks for a moment and then glanced over at the dark robed Professor who glared at her, almost daring her to misbehave in his class. The silver blue eyes blinked lazily and after a moment she smiled and wiggled her tiny fingers in a wave. Snape sat down rather abruptly, glaring at the child who continued to watch him, small hands now nestled in her lap and those odd coloured eyes never leaving him.

Harry peered into the depths of the cauldron and watched the mixture bubbling gently before sprinkling some fine powder into the mix and stirring slowly.

At his desk Professor Snape narrowed his eyes and looked hard at the little girl who matched him stare for stare.

“Love, what are you making?” Tonks said in a low voice.

Harry grinned and glanced quickly to see that Silvenestri was not in any trouble only to see her sitting quietly with the book in her lap and returned his attention to the potion. The laboratory was filled with the soft whispers of robes as the students moved around, the quiet bubbling of potions and the occasional tap of stirring spoons against the side of cauldrons.

“It’s a surprise.” He returned, equally sotto voiced.

Tonks sighed and watched, occasionally glancing up to make certain that Silvenestri was still at her feet but the dragon child was sitting quietly and seemed content enough. The odd quick look thrown at the Professor showed him still at his desk, head tilted slightly down so she assumed he was reading something.

Snape glared at the child, ignoring the class in general though fine tuned senses were automatically cataloguing the mixture of herbal aromas and in one or two cases the absolutely foul odours issuing from the cauldrons positioned about the room. While his senses did not detect anything they recognised as dangerous there were one or two additions to the odours that he did not immediately recognise. At the moment, however, he was determined to put this child in her place. He was the master of the ‘look’ and no five-year-old child was going to beat him.

“Are you alright, Silvenestri? Do you need anything?” Tonks queried as she watched Harry sort through some herbs and then strip the leaves from one and add it to the brew.

“Fine.”

The child’s eyes remained centred on the Professor who settled a little deeper in his chair and his fingers folded in his lap as he leaned forward slightly. Silvenestri herself leaned a little forward and the beginnings of a smile twitched her lips.

"We don't have a great deal of time left before the end of class." Hermione whispered, glancing at the concoction brewing in Harry's cauldron. "Are you going to be finished on time?"

"Oh yes. Almost done now." Harry murmured, watching the mixture and wafting a hand across the top of the cauldron to disperse the haze that had formed and with it a rather noxious odour.

Silvenestri refused to blink. The tall skinny man in the black robes that smelt of plants and other more dubious scents was good, very good, but she was determined to win. It was a matter of dragon honour, after all, that she not be outstared by a mere human. Even one as good at staring as this one was proving to be.

Tonks glanced up to make sure that Snape was still at his desk and wondered if the Professor had not mellowed since she was last his student. The class would soon be over and he had not once stalked across the room to accost some student and call them names for making stupid mistakes with valuable ingredients or berate them for placing themselves in danger by mixing the wrong ingredients in potentially harmful combinations.

"Snape must be in a good mood. I've never known him to be so quiet in class." She murmured.

"It's unusual for him to leave Harry alone for so long." Hermione agreed, glancing quickly at the Professor who looked to be studying some papers on his desk.

Silvenestri grinned, an outright grin of roguish delight and without blinking reached slowly and deliberately up to her face and thoroughly picked her nose.

Snape's eyes narrowed but he never blinked and continued to stare. Had any of the students been inclined to glance at the professor they had all come to fear to some degree, they might have noticed a small smirk curve his lips. Just for an instant the wily professor loosened enough to poke his tongue out at the child and offer her an encouraging smile. She would have to do better than pick her nose to throw him off.

Harry was suddenly busy at his cauldron, counting softly under his breath and on reaching sixty he whipped the cauldron from the heat and studied it intently, settling back to his seat with a satisfied nod. It only needed to cool enough for him to drink now.

“Harry? What does it do?” Hermione queried.

“You’ll know soon.” Harry said and glanced into Hermione’s cauldron. “I think that is done.”

While Hermione removed her cauldron from the heat Harry glanced around the room to discover most of the students removing their own pots from the small fires. The class was almost over but he had finished in good time and he was astounded that Snape had not once questioned his actions. The Professor was still seated at his desk absorbed in whatever those papers were. Soon enough though he would be asking for the potions of all of the students and Harry decided he had better make certain that his potion actually worked the way he presumed it would.

Silvenestri snorted softly, considering what action she might next perform to throw the human off his game. No human should be able to outlast a dragon, even a young dragon and she knew that something was going to have to break soon. The class was almost over and people were draining their potions into vials around her and cleaning up desks and cauldrons. The dark eyes of the human remained settled on her.

‘This simply will not do. I will not be bested by a human who gives My Harry a hard time. I like a challenge. He’s good.’ The last was almost a draconic purr.

Harry cleaned up the table he had been using while he waited for the potion to cool and then taking a spoon full he poured it into a test tube and held it up to the light. The thick viscous liquid was the colour of mercury and oozed more than flowed around the tube of glass. He looked at it a moment longer and then nodded decisively. It looked about right and bringing it to his lips he drank it in down in one swallow, choking a little at the taste.

“Harry!” Hermione gasped, “I hope you know what you are doing!”

Her voice penetrated Snape's concentration as well as broke Silvenestri's as she detected draconic scent within the laboratory. As one their eyes flew to Harry and as Snape exploded out of the chair Silvenestri leapt to her feet with a hard glare at Harry.

/You could have warned me/ She growled the thought at Harry.

"Mr. Potter!" Snape bellowed.

"Harry!" Tonks gasped.

Tonks watched with wide eyes and trembling hands as Harry's eyes went from their usual green to a mercury colour, his skin also flushed in a colour change to a light gray as did his hair. Snape seeing this transformation strode over to Harry muttering all the while about young fools who did not know enough not to test potions on themselves. Just once he wished that the side effects of a potion gone wrong would be permitted to be permanent, just to teach people who thought they knew better a lesson they would not so easily forget.

"Mr Potter, what on earth have you done this time?" He said looking at the half-full cauldron and trying to recognise the contents. He would give the boy a half-minute to answer or be thrown out and sent to Madam Pomfrey.

"Just some thing I learned over the summer, Sir." Harry said with a smile that widened almost painfully as his teeth grew out into fangs and at the sudden pain in his hands he held up his hands to show that his nails were now claws. "Worked better than I thought it would." He commented, his voice and words somewhat distorted by the new tooth arrangement he sported. He slipped his glasses off with one hand to see his other better as the potion's effects now affected his sight.

Tonks and Hermione were looking at Harry with raised eyebrows and their classmates were staring in a mix of horror and fascination as he drove his hand through the seasoned oak table taking a large chunk out of it. He flexed his hand, reflecting that even that blow had caused no damage.

"Harry what is that potion and how long does it last?" Tonks queried.

Silvenestri glared at Harry but she was careful to hide the smile that desperately wanted to slip her control. She could forgive him for disturbing her staring contest but next time he really had to warn her he was going to make the transformation potion.

/You make an ugly dragon. / She reflected. / There is not enough of you to be impressive. /

Harry chose to ignore that comment and answered Tonks instead. "Oh, maybe a few minutes, maybe up to half an hour, give or take a bit, and this is a Dragon Form potion, very hard to get it just right. As you can see if it is right you gain a few of the dragon's abilities, like claws and fangs plus their breath weapon and some spell resistance. However if you get it wrong you can either kill yourself or put yourself in a coma for a few weeks."

Harry surveyed himself in the mirror that Hermione handed him and after a moment decided that he preferred his green eyes to the mercury they had become.

Snape hissed like a boiling kettle. "There is no such potion, Mr Potter and even if there is how would you know about it and what it does?" Snape said his hands resting next to Harry's cauldron. He was uncertain if he was more upset that the boy had made such a powerful potion and tested it on himself or that he had missed the chance to get Harry thrown out of his class. 'Always next week.' He thought, though if the potion did not wear off that 'next week' would more likely be today. There was still hope. He was going to have to report this to Dumbledore and get his hands on a copy of the potion so that it could properly be tested and determined to be safe or not.

Harry smiled and handed the mirror back to Hermione. "I found the recipe for the potion in a book I was given over the summer, Sir. If you like I can give it to you and as for how I know what it does, that too was thoroughly explained in the book. If you could move everyone behind me we can find out if I'm right about the last of the abilities it is said to give you."

Snape considered the request for a moment and in the end nodded and directed everyone to get behind Harry. The potion was made and

drunk so he might as well gain what information he could for later reference.

Draco Malfoy glared at Harry as he grudgingly moved behind the professor. Once again Potter had grabbed the lime light with his behaviour and once again he was not likely to be punished. He sneered as Snape directed Harry to attempt the breath weapon and ensure he did not damage anything if at all possible, since he did not know which of the Dragon breeds Harry had crafted the potion to emulate.

Pulling his head back Harry concentrated on thinking breath weapon and flinging it clear of the people avidly watching him, then threw his head forward and opened his mouth. A cloud of silver mist erupted from his fanged maw and he recognised it as Silvenestri's paralysing spray.

"Well that certainly seemed to work. " He commented, noting Snape eyeing the field of effect and making quick notes on the table with a piece of charcoal. "Now for the other test. Tonks would you mind hitting me with a charm please?"

Harry walked out into the middle of the room and looked at Tonks and catching the glare from Malfoy, he knew that Draco would love to hit him with a charm. While he had asked Tonks to do the casting he fully expected Professor Snape to be the one to cast the spell.

Tonks nodded and pulled out her wand and managed to utter the first word of a holding charm but before she could complete the charm Snape stepped in front of her, wand raised. With hard, calculating eyes the Professor uttered the words of a charm that was one small step short of being a forbidden spell. Having recognised the spell Tonks had been about to use, he wanted something a little more powerful to truly test the supposed magic resistance the potion was supposed to imbue. The charm hit Harry and amid the gasps of shock from the students when nothing happened Professor Snape nodded, seemingly totally unsurprised. Harry was delighted as the charm directed at him died with out causing a bit of pain. He, like Snape, considered the test very effective indeed.

“Well, Mr Potter. It would appear that that is indeed a powerful potion and yes, I would like to have that recipe. As soon as you can get it to me, please. Everyone else, get back to work.” Snape glared at the class who scattered and hurried to clean up their cauldrons. “ Five points from Gryffindor for your cheek.” Snape commented as he turned and strode away from Tonks.

Silvenestri had watched the entire incident with confidence that the potion would protect Harry and now she stared up at the tall Professor baring down on her, eager to return to her staring match. He paused beside her, bending low and met her eyes, narrowing his own as he considered where he had seen eyes like that just moments ago.

‘Curious.’ He mused. He flashed her a quick smile. “Later, little one. Class is almost over. We can have a return bout at a later time. You are very good, you know.”

Silvenestri’s eyes widened as he slipped a sweet into her hand and with a hard-eyed glare about the dungeon that he considered his home more than anywhere he stalked back to his desk. On the way he snarled at one of the Slytherin students to clean up the puddle of goo he had left on the floor.

Harry smiled a very toothy smile at Tonks and Hermione as he settled in his seat and poured half of the remaining potion into a flask like Moody’s then secured it to his hip. He then placed the remaining liquid in a sample jar for Professor Snape to try and work out. No doubt the Professor would use every test there was on the potion to determine all of its properties.

“I can honestly say that I have seen you looking better, Harry.” Hermione commented as she bottled her own potion. “It’s the teeth, I think. Weird.”

Tonks stifled a giggle and looked more closely at Harry, eyeing his hair for a long moment and noting the darker flush beginning to return. A quick glance at his skin and nails confirmed the change and she sighed, somewhat relieved that the duration of the potion seemed to short. Less than half an hour was good in her view. She much



preferred the Harry she knew to the strange creature the potion had produced in him.

“Well, it seems that you’re right about it not lasting long. Thank goodness.” She paused and then leaned closer to stare into his eyes.

Glancing quickly at the Professor who was watching she grasped a piece of charcoal and wrote some quick notes under Snape’s, noting that the change was noticeable first in Harry’s hair, skin colour and then claws. She was almost surprised when Snape nodded faintly and then his dark eyes swept over the remainder of the class.

Taking the opportunity she leaned close to Harry’s ear. “Doing anything tonight?”

Harry smiled showing that his teeth were well on their way back to being normal which she hastily wrote down. “Oh, not much. I was thinking I might just read a book. Why, did you have something else in mind?” He said playing the innocent even if he wasn’t.

Tonks looked at Harry absently noting the changes that now were coming with greater speed as the potion’s effects wore off and smiled. “Meet me tonight at 11 in your common room and I’ll show you what I have planned for tonight.” With that Tonks scratched some last notes on the desk, checked that Silvenestri was sitting quietly with her book and left the room giving Harry and every other male in the room she knew was watching her an extra swing of her hips.

Hermione looked at Harry and the looks on the faces of a number of the male students sighed at his look. ‘Boys,’ She thought before looking down at Silvenestri. “If you like, Harry, I’ll look after Silvenestri tonight seeing that tomorrow is Saturday and you two can sleep in. I’ll make up some story for anyone who asks.” She looked at her potion, swirling it gently in the tube and nodded, satisfied that it looked exactly as it should and fitted the stopper before looking back to Harry. “Is there anything I will need to know for tomorrow morning? Anything I need to know about Silvenestri? Special needs?”

Harry looked at the silver haired girl sitting quietly on the floor then at Hermione. “Well, she did just feed this morning so she will not need to do that again tomorrow. Just tell her to keep her form at night and

you'll do fine with her... I think your potion is starting to set to your cauldron."

Hermione looked at her cauldron to see that the potion was indeed starting to set and hastily began to scrape down the sides, thanking Harry for the warning and immeasurably relieved to discover that she was not going to have to take the dragon to the forbidden forest to feed. She was uncertain she could take the sight of the silver creature again. She much preferred the little girl version.

“Thanks Harry. I really don’t think I could cope with taking her into the forest if she says she is hungry while you are with Tonks.”

“If she gets insistent about being hungry just take her to the kitchen and tell Dobby to give her some meat. Raw, preferably. That will hold her over until I have a talk with her in the morning.” Harry said as Silvenestri crawled into his lap blinked at the watching Hermione and promptly fell a sleep with her head resting on his shoulder.

Hermione nodded and together they made their way to the desk where they handed their samples to Snape and with Harry carrying Silvenestri they left the room and headed to the Great Hall for dinner. Harry held Silvenestri lightly in his arms while thinking up what to say to the other Gryffindor's later that night. He was looking forward to meeting Tonks in private.

[illegible]

Ron was waiting for them in the hall and keeping seats free for them. As they settled into place Harry noted that the Professor's were all gathering at the head table and that Professor Lupin was talking to Dumbledore and that the newly arrived Professor Snape was quick to join the pair.

/ Must have them keeping an eye on me. / Harry thought while stirring Silvenestri.

Silvenestri rubbed at her eyes and nodded as he told her to take a seat between Hermione and Harry as Ron started to talk to Hermione about his day while also keeping an eye on Harry and Silvenestri as

Harry filled a plate for himself and another for the child. He wondered how it was possible for such a little girl to have such a very healthy appetite but then, he liked his food too.

Dinner passed in joking conversation and much appreciation of the feast and soon enough the hall started to empty of students and Professor's. Harry led Ron and Hermione out of the hall with Silvenestri beside him, the book Lupin had given her clutched tightly in her hands. Her cascade of silver hair bounced around as she skipped along next to him.

On the way to the Gryffindor common room Harry walked out on to the fourth floor and walked by a painting of a middle-aged witch with black hair and gold eyes. Her robes were a royal blue and a black raven with golden eyes was seated on her shoulder. The picture looked enough like a muggle painting that he paused. He had not expected to find muggle work but you never knew what you might find in Hogwarts.

He was surprised to see that next to this painting was a symbol just like the one over the fire mantle in his room in Privet Drive. The same Silver Dragon and cream background the dragons wings in that same half raised position and the noble head held high and above the creature a double bladed sword with the very same distinctive curve to each blade. This time, however, the symbol was not the product of magic but was very obviously a product of the muggle world. A muggle painting.

"Rowena Ravenclaw." Harry mused recognising the woman as being one he had met within the world of the Sorting Hat. "I did not expect to find your painting placed right next to the last Dragon Lords symbol." Harry mused aloud, looking at the painting and remembering what she had said about her essence being on this floor.

Ron, standing behind Harry looked at the painting and then at Harry with an arched brow. "Why the interest in Rowena, Harry?" He looked at the painting and then at the symbol. "What was it that you called this one?" He was honestly curious and it was not just that he was doing a little fishing for information since Professor Dumbledore had

asked both he and Hermione to find out what it was that had made Harry so much stronger over one summer.

Harry smiled at Ron and shrugged. "Oh nothing, let's get back to the common room. I've got training tonight with Tonks and I would like to get a copy done of a potion recipe Snape wanted to see. Homework, I guess you could call it. If I don't get all the details right he'll skin me." He led the way down the hall with Ron and Hermione right behind him and Silvenestri holding tight to his hand.

Ron nodded, as did Hermione as they walked down the hall and none of them noticed the painting of Rowena Ravenclaw watching them. When they turned around a bend in the hall the finely painted lips of the woman in the painting turned up into a small, knowing smile.

It was nearly 11 by the time Harry had finished copying the details of the potion recipe from the book *Dragon Lords, Myth or Fact*. Harry stretched slowly in his seat in the common room where he had been talking with Hermione and Ron about their school work thus far. Silvenestri was curled sound asleep next to him, her hair flowing down the side of the oversized chair.

Tonks sashayed into the common room, her hair it's true colour for once but her eyes were a rich jade green and her face still bore that faux heart shape that she favoured when in the presence of others. Harry squashed the wish that she stops hiding herself but he knew that she would become her true self when they were in private.

"Harry, its time for your Occlumency lesson and then some more physical training I think." She said the last with a smile looking Harry up and down as he got to his feet. "Can't possibly have you getting lazy just because you are back at Hogwarts."

Hermione rolled her eyes at this but kept quiet instead choosing to smirk at the look on Ron's face and promptly clipped him up the ears to draw his attention away from Tonks. There was an echo of slaps and male voices exclaiming 'Hey!' about the room. Harry sniggered and exited the room, Tonks following him and just as she reached the fat ladies portrait she swayed her hips just a little more and sniggered at the chorus of slaps and 'Hey!' from the room.

After Harry and Tonks had left Ron absently rubbed his right ear, scowling at Hermione and noticed that Silvenestri was awake and at that moment looking at where Harry had gone with a smile on her face. With a small sigh the little girl reached to play with a pawn from the chess set beside the chair.

“Hey, there. Awake again? How about a game of chess while we wait for Harry to finish his lesson?” Ron asked when Silvenestri began moving the pieces of the chess set, lining up the battle pieces and then flicking them over with her fingers.

Nodding Silvenestri turned to face him with a beaming smile and immediately began setting up the board, each piece precisely in its correct place. With the board set up she settled herself on the white side, leaving Ron the black pieces. Hermione sat back and watched as the game started thinking that this should be quick if what she had read about the extinct Greater Dragons was true.

A sense of fair play prompted her to nudge Ron. “Harry said she was something of a child prodigy, Ron.”

Hearing this some of the other late night Gryffindor’s gathered around the two players to see how the game was going. Ron was by far the best chess player in the tower while Harry’s daughter, as she was called, was an unknown.

The room was in a suspense filled hush a half-hour later as the entire common room now watched the match. Ron was missing half of his pieces and Silvenestri had more pieces, most of which held more power than Ron’s but the last move by Ron had been a clever trap and had removed her Queen from the board. Silvenestri was pouting at the board, eyes devouring each piece as she considered the setback the loss of her Queen represented but suddenly a blinding smile lit her face and she glared triumphantly at Ron. She now knew how to trounce him!

Hermione looked up from her book and studied the board as Silvenestri moved one of her last remaining pawns and after a moment she saw the scowl on Ron’s face deepen. He saw it too and Hermione smiled at the fact that Ron was going to lose. It was inevitable and she knew that he knew it.

“Ron, you might want to quit about now. She is going to win in the next... four moves anyway.”

Ron looked from Hermione to the board and sighed. He knew exactly where he had made his mistake and he knew that it was a mistake he could not recover from. “Three, actually.” He returned as he knocked his king over and stared as the king screamed at him for giving up so easily. “Good game, Silvenestri. Very good game.” He sighed and stretched cramped muscles as the other students congratulated them both on the game and wandered back to their books. “I’ve been playing longer than you have been alive. You are going to be a dynamite player.”

Silvenestri smiled and shrugged her shoulders. “Harry told me all of your moves when I played him and I just took it from there.” She then looked at Hermione. “I’m hungry.” She said it like it was the most common thing in the world to be hungry that late at night after tucking away the enormous meal she had eaten earlier.

“Harry told you...? Well, guess I have to work on my game style so you don’t have that advantage over me.” Ron grinned, feeling just a little better at knowing that Silvenestri had had a slight advantage of knowledge over him. Harry and he had played often.

Hermione smiled and held out her hand to Silvenestri. “Well, Harry said that if you got hungry tonight I was to take you to the kitchen, so lets go. Ron, I’ll be back later, ok?”

He nodded and went up the stairs to the boy’s dorms muttering about reading some more books on advanced chess while Hermione and Silvenestri slipped out of the portrait hole and made their way down to the kitchen.

“Silvenestri can you get by with what ever Dobby gives you or do we have to go out into the forest?” Hermione asked, hoping that she could make do with the food in the kitchen rather than venture out into the forbidden forest.

She nodded to Professor Snape as they passed him on his patrol of the hallway, not worrying as she was a Prefect and was allowed out of bed after hours. She did think it a little strange and decided it must

have been a trick of the dim light that she thought she had seen Snape smile at Silvenestri. She looked twice but he was certainly scowling as he stalked off so she put it down to the shadows.

"I'll settle for what Dobby can give me but can you take me to the forest tomorrow if Harry is not up? I always get extra hungry when I grow." Silvenestri said as they descended the last of the staircases and reached the door to the kitchen.

Hermione swallowed at the very thought of taking the dragon out for a draconic feast but she nodded that she would and silently prayed that Harry would not be late.

Dobby was there within a heartbeat of them entering the kitchen and bouncing around Hermione in delight while saying in his high voice, "Miss Hermione came and visit Dobby! Dobby is pleased. What does Miss Hermione want?"

Hermione smiled and bent low, taking Dobby's head in her hands and planting a kiss on his forehead which only made him dance more with delight. "I just need some of that meat pie from dinner Dobby. Sort of a midnight snack, that's all."

Dobby was gone in a flash and was back just as fast with a plate larger than himself holding a huge meat pie that had not been cut at dinner. "Here you go Miss Hermione. Dobby find Miss Hermione a pie to enjoy." He handed the pie to Hermione then vanished into the cavernous depths of the kitchen again.

Hermione nodded her thanks though the House Elf was long gone and led the way over to a table and placed the food. Silvenestri clambered up onto a chair and started to peel the pastry from the meat and eat the filling with her fingers, her knife once again left sitting next to the plate untouched. Hermione sighed and shook her head slightly but made no comment about lack of table manners.

After placing a silence charm around the table to give them privacy while they talked Hermione sat down next to Silvenestri and watched her skilfully gut the pie without eating the pastry. "So then, can you tell me more about yourself back when Harry had just meet you?" she

asked hoping to learn more about Harry's new powers and what else Silvenestri could do.

Silvenestri looked up from her food and then back to the pie while telling Hermione about Harry raising her from her hatching and something of the events that occurred over the years. She included the dragon hunter coming to kill her and even told Hermione about the spell that Harry had cast to modify Dumbledore's memory and why he had done so.

Hermione nodded, barely hiding her shock at some of the things Harry had done in the past but she said little and when Silvenstri had finished with her meal she led the way back to the common room. On the way she told Silvenstri about her life before meeting Harry and Ron in their first year at Hogwarts and finished on the retelling of the troll in the girl's bathroom.

They passed the painting that marked Tonks' door to see that the subject of the painting had run off to visit someone else while Harry and Tonks were doing his 'physical training'.

“At least they have the good sense to use a Silence Charm about their bed.” Hermione said looking a little disgusted at the empty portrait.

Silvenestri just smiled and hummed softly to herself, well aware of what Harry was feeling at the present time. Through the bond they shared she felt Harry's emotions. At the moment he felt very happy indeed.

[illegible]

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## Chapter 14: Rowena.

/ Telepathic /

26 October 1996 A.D. 12:33 PM

The month passed quickly as did the next month before Harry had a chance to escape attention and go to Rowena's painting by himself. He made his way to the fourth floor and determined to see what it was hiding and for a time at least to escape the rumours and innuendo that suddenly abounded concerning his love life. The possibilities for who might be considered his type had become the talk of the school and everyone seemed intent on knowing who was his 'type'.

Reaching the painting he noted that it was still there and looked the same except the raven was gone, no doubt visiting someone in one of the paintings further along the floor. Walking up to the painting Harry studied it for a long while than lowered his head and in a clear voice called "Miss Ravenclaw, how have you been?" for lack of anything better to say.

He did not actually expect to get a response as this painting looked like a muggle painting but the Raven was definitely missing and he was willing to try for a reaction.

After a moment the painted lips curved into a smile and the eyes changed from gold to Harry's green. "Hello Harry. To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?" The voice was soft and gentle just like it had been when he talked to her in the Sorting Hat but now the underlying hardness was gone.

"Nothing special, just visiting. I was wondering what it is that you know about me and about Silvenestri." Harry said with a smile and nodded politely to the painting.

"Well, I would suggest that we move to a more comfortable place for this talk. Don't you agree, Harry?" The painted woman smiled wider and before Harry could say anything the painting moved aside to reveal the doorway to a room behind it.

The room wore the colours of Ravenclaw blue and gray with one wall taken over by a massive bookshelf packed with as many books as could possibly be squeezed onto it. A large fire on the opposite wall was burning merrily in an ornate oversized hearth and two large blue leather chairs were placed in front of it to face the fire. The high winged backs of the overstuffed chairs were facing Harry and the heat of the fire was pleasant. The floor was highly polished wood with no carpets and Harry found himself staring at his reflection in the floor and fingering a two days growth of beard.

‘Forgot to shave this morning.’ He thought and wondered what spell had been cast on the floor to get it that reflective.

Looking around slowly at the paintings that were hung Harry was stunned to see a painting of himself and Silvenstri. It was a portrait that showed them in the days when they were still nesting in the forest outside what would eventually become the school.

“Now how did that get made?” He said out loud looking at the painting and moving close to study the fine workmanship.

“I painted that when I was 13 years old, Harry, that one and many other painting hanging in this school. Now come in and have a seat. I have been waiting for you.” The familiar voice came from one of the chairs by the fire.

Harry walked over to the chairs uncertain exactly what he would see. The most solid ghost he had seen at the castle smiled at him as she waved toward the other chair. Unlike the other ghosts that he had seen here Rowena had more colour in her than just silver. He had no trouble recognising the black hair and gold eyes of Rowena Ravenclaw. She was sitting in the chair by the fire, not floating just above it as he had seen other ghosts do and she looked almost like she was still alive.

“Hello Miss Ravenclaw. How have you been?” Harry questioned politely as though he spoke to the ghost of one of the founders of Hogwarts all of the time. He was shocked to think that a founder of Hogwarts had actually become a ghost.

Rowena looked at Harry and smiled politely and with genuine pleasure, her eyes changing colour from the amber gold that he had admired in the painting before to now shine a sky blue. "Quite well, thank you Harry, do have a seat. Now you must call me Rowena and you must tell me what it is I can do for you."

Harry nodded and settled into the offered chair before continuing the conversation, "Thanks and if I may I must say that this is a very nice room. It must have taken a lot of work."

"Thank you, my dear. You must remember that I have had over 850 years to work on this sanctuary and that does give one time to work on things to get them just right." Rowena said and waved her hand as a pot of tea appeared on the table next to Harry.

He watched, fascinated as her dark hair blushed to a deep gold, lingered for a moment and then blushed back into her what he was certain was her natural dark colouring

"Do have some tea, Harry. It has been many years since I last had someone to take tea with and confess that I am delighted that my visitor is the last Dragon Lord."

Harry smiled and poured a cup of tea for himself then looked up at the painting over the fireplace. "You were 13 when you painted that?" Harry paused to take a sip of his tea before asking, "What was it that made you so fascinated with the Last Dragon Lord? How did you get such an accurate likeness to me and to Silvenstri?"

Rowena smiled and smoothed her blue robes then looked at the painting and for long minutes she entertained thoughts of her old life. Her eyes reverted again to the amber that complimented her auburn tresses before she looked to Harry.

"I was born and raised a witch in Hogsmeade and like most of the children here I walked the forest that now make up the grounds of Hogwarts. One day... I think I was about 8... I wandered further than usual and I became lost deep in the woods. While trying to find a way out I found your clearing with the cave. It had started to rain and I was tired, wet and cold so I tried to enter the cave to get out of the rain but I was thrown across the clearing and knocked out. It must have about

an hour before I woke up. When I came too it was to see an image of you and Silvenestri before my eyes. I stared at you and you stared at me and then you and the dragon nodded and I knew that I could go into the cave. When I tried to enter the cave again I was able to and inside I found a marvellous suit of armour and a great shining sword resting on a stand in the back of the cave. I was rather disappointed to find no cloak as most people said you would have worn one of gleaming silver but the armour and sword were wonders enough. After that discovery I would head back to the cave as often as I could manage to elude my mothers sight.”

She paused and considered the fire for a long moment no doubt remembering long ago days when a carefree little girl had run wild in the woods. Finally she smiled and looked over at Harry watching in respectful silence and waiting for her to continue.

“I was 13 when I had this feeling I had to make a place of learning there near that cave. It was that feeling, the need itself that made me paint that portrait and find Godric and the others to help me to build this school. It took 12 year for me to find them and talk them into helping build this place. By the time we had agreed to build Hogwarts I had married a wizard in Hogsmeade I had known all of my life. We had a little girl during our travels to find those who would be the Co-founders of the school of witchcraft and wizardry that I knew must be built.”

Harry nodded and considered his hostess in silence for a moment, watching as her eyes became green and then blue and settled once again to the amber gold. “That is how Tonks’s blood line was started? Your family, your daughters descendants in time married into the Blacks.” At an inquisitive arch of a regal dark brow Harry smiled. “You are a Metamorphmagus and I know that it would skip a generation every now and then, sometimes not showing for up to 5 generations at a time. I assumed correctly?”

“Yes, you did. Anyway, some years later the school was build and Godric and Salazar started fighting over who was to be permitted into the school while Helga and my family and I determined that anyone who had magically power should be permitted entrance. That was how the four houses were formed.”

“That still does not answer why you were so interested in Silvenestri or me, Rowena.” Harry poured another cup of tea for himself and settled back into the chair.

“A little girl’s curiosity and love of fairytales, perhaps? I would always make certain that I was at the Inn in town whenever a bard or a storyteller would come to town and I would hope for a story of the Dragon Lords of old. I knew the legends as well as any of the bards and when I found your cave I knew that I just had to meet you. I had my dreams and this one was just as strong as the one that bade me build Hogwarts and to full fill it I became a ghost. I have waited a very long time Harry and now that you and Silvenestri are here and I know what type of person you are I just want to help you fight this dark lord. I can help you against Voldemort and I might just be of assistance in helping you to deal with Dumbledore, the latest Hogwarts headmaster to indulge in a little control mania for the good of his students. Would you be willing to allow me to help you, Harry?” Rowena rose from her chair and glided over to Harry, holding out one ghostly hand to him in friendship.

Harry looked at the offered hand and then at Rowena. “I would be honoured to work with the founder of this school.” He reached out and placed his hand on hers to feel the familiar cold chill he had felt when he walked through Nick in second year.

Rowena smiled and closed her ghostly fingers around Harry’s. “I am pleased. It is time for you to see just what it is that this room offers to you Harry.”

Harry rose to his feet, curious and followed her over to one of the doors he had not at first noticed in the room, wondering what it could possibly be that she was offering to him in this room. It was clearly a very magical room and he was eager to learn what he could of the secrets of the ghosts sanctuary.

At a motion of her delicate fingers Harry opened the door and peered in. The floor of the large room was marked with five power circles, one for each of the four elements and the last as a focus circle.

A smile twitched his lips and he glanced at the ghost. "Studied my notes on runes and power circles, I see." He was pleased to see that each circle was complete and perfect right down to the minutest detail.

"Yes. From your notes that I read I understood that you need to have the focus to work any element of your choosing so I had all five of the symbols placed in this room." Rowena said, looking at the black circles inscribed into the stone floor, a happy smile curving her lips. She would not tell him of all the trouble she had gone through to get the symbols exactly right.

The ghost glided over to the next door and Harry followed, opening the door to peer into the room and find each wall of the room inset with four framed mirrors that closely resembled windows. "What is this room for Rowena?" Harry queried, looking into one of the mirrors to see his face reflected back at him.

Rowena smiled and walked over to the north-facing window. "This, Harry, is a room of viewing. If you stand in front of a mirror and speak the name of anyone who you wish to see or any place that you wish to see, the mirror will show you that thing or that person. If you wanted to you could see Voldemort from the south window and Dumbledore from the north and watch them both if you angle yourself appropriately."

Intrigued Harry nodded and walked over to the east window and after a moment's thought he looked up into the mirrored window. "Show me Voldemort's home." His reflected image blurred and shifted and a dark deep cave appeared in the mirror. For some reason Harry felt certain that that cave lay somewhere in the heart of England. "Well I like this. We just have to make certain that no one else enters this room other than you and such people as I think need to know about this."

Rowena nodded and lead the way out of the viewing room and over to the last door which appeared next to the bookshelf. Opening the door showed Harry another round room with a circle inscribed into the middle of the floor. He quickly scanned the circle and his smile widened as he recognised the runes and the use of the circle. Whoever stood within the circle and spoke the right words would be

teleported to where ever the person wanted. "Very nice Rowena. I must say that this is wonderful and does it work as it is meant to? It was always a difficult spell."

Rowena nodded. "Yes, this can get you anywhere in the world in a heart beat. Now the last of all the wonders in these rooms are the books. All that you see upon these shelves deal with the Dark Arts and how to fight them. Wands, runes and focus magic... It all is to be found here."

Harry smiled, his eyes shining as he took in the scope of the bookshelves and the gift that Rowena had given him in granting him the use of them. "Now that is guaranteed to get Dumbledore pissed off at me. Just for looking through those books let alone the idea of learning anything from them."

Rowena smiled and nodded and led the way to the fireplace. "Though it may seem restrictive and certainly is most annoying I assure you Harry, that Dumbledore only has your best interests at heart. We shall simply have to manage him as we need to. I have arranged for you to be able to bring those whom you trust to the door to enter this room. Only with your consent may they be granted admittance to this place."

Harry nodded and Rowena waved for another pot of tea to appear and they settled to talk more of the past. Harry was interested in the other founders of Hogwarts and to his questions concerning families Rowena smiled and informed him that of course the others had children. Salazar Slytherin had children and Dumbledore was Godric's descendant not Harry as so many had thought he might be after he had pulled the sword from the hat.

He remained talking to Rowena until dinnertime when he left to join the others in the great hall only to bump into Tonks who had been looking for him.

"Harry where were you? I've been looking for you for an hour now." She gave him a quick hug before listening to what he had to say.

Harry told her about his talk with Rowena and with a very wide grin he even told her that he had learned that she was descended of Rowena Ravenclaw's bloodline.

"Well! I must say I never knew about that. Anyway, Silvenestri had to go back into the forest. Someone gave her something with chocolate in it and now she can't changed back for a day. How are we going to explain her absence?" She said leading Harry down the hall, bypassing the Great Hall and leading the way outside. Seeing the worried look on his face she hugged him quickly again. "She is alright."

"Damn it, Tonks. Charley Weasley is meant to be coming in tomorrow to get this 'wild Dragon' out of the forest. Who gave her the chocolate? It takes a lot to force this sort of change in a dragon's magic." Harry said leading the way across the grounds and into the forest quickly before anyone noticed them.

Tonks followed Harry into the forest and lit her wand to show the path. "It was Draco, of course. The idiot. He found out that Silvenestri is allergic to it so he did something to her food. White chocolate, so she never realised what she was eating until it was too late. I think he did it because he is jealous. You very obviously care for her and haven't been taking his bait lately. He must be feeling deprived."

Harry blinked at her, and then nodded, almost running until they came to the clearing to see Hermione sitting next to the dragon who looked more gray than silver.

"Hermione, how much did she throw up?" Harry said walking over to the dragon and started to run a hand over Silvenestri's jaw sending soothing thoughts to her through their link.

"Not much but it was enough for her to settle to sleep the rest off. She did tell me it would be over a day before she can get back to full strength." Hermione watched as Harry stroked the dragon, noting the concern in Harry's eyes.

"It's ok, Silvenestri. I'll make sure Charley doesn't find you and I'll make sure that Malfoy pays for doing this as well." Harry crooned into the dragon's ear and then turned back to Hermione and Tonks. "I







have to go soon and deal with Charley and the great Dragon Hunt but for now he had some time to wait and catch arrival of Draco. He was intending to have a good laugh at Draco's expense, just deserts he was sure for feeding Silvenestri chocolate.

Ron practically fell through the doors of the Great Hall, laughing so hard that he was holding his sides and gesturing back at the doors. "Harry! Harry do you know who did that to Malfoy? The red and gold... well...Harry, it just does not go well at all." Ron fell into the seat next to Harry and looked around for Hermione.

"She ate earlier." Harry said without waiting for the query. He was not about to tell Ron that Hermione was with Tonks in the forest looking after a sick dragon.

Two students from Hufflepuff ran in the door shrieking with laughter and Harry looked around in time to see Draco storm into the great hall. His previously shoulder length hair, almost snow white was now cut close to his head in spiked disarray and the blonde was hidden under rich Gryffindor red with the gold banding alone the sides and through the middle, giving him something of the appearance of a light house like brightness.

Harry along with most of the students in the great hall started to laugh out loud and he noticed that even Dumbledore who was seated at the main table smirked before rising to his feet with a very serious look on his face and two twinkling blue eyes. Draco glared around the hall and snarled then strode to his usual place at the Slytherin table and proceeded to act as though his hair was not neon red with golden highlights. He had tried everything he could think of to turn his hair its usual gleaming white blonde even if he could not regrow the length and nothing had worked.

That was all right, they could laugh because he knew who had done this though he could not prove it and that was just fine and dandy with him. Potter had remembered their feud. It was his turn next.

Ron by then had crammed down as much food as his mouth as it could hold but was still sniggering at Malfoy when ever he looked over at him. "So Harry, you going to help my brother with that dragon

today or leave it to the Weasley Dragon Hunters?" he asked after swallowing enough to allow himself to be understood.

Harry looked away from him and in the direction of Draco and said in a quiet voice. "I think I will leave it to you two. I've got home work to do."

"But Harry! It'll be great. There's four of us going into the forest for this dragon. Charley, Fred and George and me. Charley agreed to teach me how to hunt Dragons. Don't you want to learn?" When Harry ignored him Ron sighed and crammed more food into his mouth, chewing heartily. "If you change your mind we aren't going until 2. You could always join us then." Ron was focused on his breakfast and on sparing the odd look at the neon bright Draco and missed the worried look in Harry's eyes.

"Fine Ron. Later." Harry nodded and left the great hall and headed for the fourth floor and to 'Rowena's Chamber of Secrets' as he chose to call the rooms that Rowena had shown him yesterday. He moved swiftly all the way trying to work out how best to keep Charley and his brothers away from Silvenestri with out them seeing him or coming across the dragon herself.

In the great hall Draco watched Harry leave the hall and sneered. He had not heard the last of this.

It was close to two in the afternoon and Harry was sitting in the mirror room using the viewing mirrors to watch over Silvenestri, Tonks and Hermione from the north window. He was now dressed in his armour and wore the cloak, his sword resting within its magical folds.

Rowena stood at the west wall, looking out of the viewing window and watching Ron who was waiting with the twins while Harry was watching Silvenestri. "Harry. Charley is here." She said when the form of Charley Weasley port keyed in to stand in front of his brothers.

Harry left his window to join her and watched Charley for a long minute, noting that he had acquired some more burns since the last time he had seen him. "Well. I'd say that its time for me to go. Wish me luck?" he said looking at Rowena.



## Chapter 15: Dragon Hunt.

/ Telepathic /

27 October 1996 A.D 14:05 PM

Charley walked up to his bothers and nodded to them, gifting them with a serious glare. "Now, I want you all to understand that I'm only letting you come with me because I think this is only a young dragon so I'm not expecting it to be too dangerous. However you can never be too sure with dragons, even young ones. I expect you to stay close to me at all times, do exactly as I say when I say it and keep you wands ready."

Fred and George nodded with their normal cheeky grins on their faces while Ron just looked nervous about going into the forest but he was determined. This was the perfect opportunity for him to learn something about Dragons and this one being so conveniently close to Hogwarts looked like a good one to start with.

Charley studied them for a long moment before he nodded and led the way into the forest with long confident strides. None of the dragon hunters spotted the cloaked figure lurking in the undergrowth that followed them as they moved deeper into what had been his home many years ago. It had been his home in eons past but even though so much time had passed to this day it still remained his home and he felt that the forest itself knew him.

No animal or beast would dare to attack this cloaked hunter who seemed to ooze danger.

The first sign that a Dragon was living in the woods was found a half-hour later on one of the oldest tracks to be found within the forest.

Charley looked over the half-eaten carcass of a deer noting that it had been killed not too long before. He knew that the kill was fresh and he took particular note of the tracks around the body. Ron and the twins stood right behind him as he made his examination, Ron looking a little green and the twins unusually solemn.

“Well, definitely a dragon. It’s eaten not too long ago so we can hope that it was happy with this meal and will not be so inclined to start getting sassy with us.” He commented before getting to his feet. He had been careful to examine the bite marks on the lower half of the carcass and had noted that most of the blood had been drained from the body.

Ron looked at the body one hand over his mouth and nose to help block the coppery smell of fresh blood and uncooked meat. “How do you know a dragon did this? I mean there are other things in this forest that can do that.”

Charley nodded and smiled at his youngest brother pleased that he was asking questions. “True, but the last time I checked there were no animals of any appreciable size in this forest that would take its time with its kill. It takes time to drain, as in suck the blood from a deer of this size. The size of the prints suggest the thing is as large as two horses and I’d say it is a young dragon that is still growing and that is definitely a reptilian spoor.” He said pointing to the set of four prints next to the body and the disturbed ground that suggested a sweep of tail.

Fred was looking in one of the prints while Charley was talking “Hey what is this?” he said pulling a silver colour scale out of the print that was large enough to fit in the palm of his hand.

Charley looked at the scale and noted that it bore a couple of small scratches as though it had been pulled off the body but knew that it was more likely to have fallen from the main body and that the scratches were the result of irritated scratching.

“That my brother is a dragon scale and I think the beast is malting which will not improve its temper any. I’ve never seen a silver before... must be older than I thought. Or it might be a new breed I have never seen before.” He looked worried at the thought.

Fred nodded and placed the scale in his pocket then followed his brothers deeper into the forest. Everyone had their wands at the ready ever now and before the site of the kill was hidden by forest undergrowth he glanced back, wondering if this might be a huge discovery. A new dragon species?







cloaked figure that was moving parallel to them. Harry had been moving alone side of them for a few minutes now, any sound that he might have made was hidden by the sound of the wind moving in the canopy of the trees. He moved in the lower branches of the trees, ghost like, a wraith and his eyes never left the Weasley Brothers down on the forest floor.

It was time to distract the hunters and Harry was still torn as to what he must do, but he would not have anything happen to part him from Silvenestri.

George was the first to hear the low whistling sound and paused, reaching for his twin who was frowning and now glanced behind them. Charley paused as the whistle wafted eerily through the forest and Ron froze, looking about him, not knowing what to expect. At a signal from Charley they moved back along the path they had taken trying to find what it was making the sound. After a moment of cautious creeping and intense listening to the low whistle the sound stopped and the sharp cracking sound of a tree branch snapping off from its parent was heard. Charley glanced up and threw himself at Ron and yelled for the twins to move. The four red heads dived out from under the falling branch that came crashing down to lie where they had been standing only seconds before.

"What the hell did that?" Fred stared up at the tree and then bent to examine the branch. He whistled softly at sight of the clear cut marking the branch.

Charley stared at the cut for a long moment, then looked up into the tree, unable to see the point from which the branch was originally cut. He knew that it had to be fairly high up in the tree and the cleanness of the strike sent a chill up his spine. A single cut.

"I don't know. What I do know is that it was a clear cut and it was a single fast stroke. Something is not right about this." He whispered. "Something is very wrong." He looked at each of his brothers, wondering briefly if perhaps he should not send them back to Hogwarts, but that would mean sending them alone through the forbidden forest. "Be on the look out all of you."

The three brothers exchanged looks, Ron gulping visibly and staring up into the trees. Each considered the other for a long moment and they nodded agreeing to watch each other's backs silently and walked on. Charley sighed and slipped around them into the lead.

Harry sighed softly as he watched the four young men vanish into the trees yet again. He was seated on a branch mid way up a tall tree down the trail from where the incident happened and he extended his hand before him after a moment to receive the magically returning sword from seemingly thin air. He twisted his wrist to catch the hilt of the blade as it spun in the air, as it appeared, not considering the danger or catching the spinning device. He had hoped that Charley would have sent them back.

"Why did you not send at least Ron back?" He sighed and shook his head. It was dangerous for Charley to continue with his brothers but it would be dangerous to send them back too. He had known it was not likely to work, but he had to try. "Well I'll just have to try again. The trail divides into a fork just ahead and I had better make certain you take the right trail."

Harry stood carefully, balancing on the branch and transferred the sword to his left hand, removing his wand with his right. Chanting a summing charm on the next tree he twisted the charm delicately so that instead of summoning the tree to him, he appeared on a designated tree branch but instead of pulling the tree to him he went to the tree. Repeating the charm and the delicate twist of the magic required he travelled in this manner until he reached the fork in the trail where he must decide quickly how best to delay the brothers or better still how to get them to abandon the search for the dragon entirely.

Ron was leading when they've come around the bend in the trail to see the fork. He hesitated before continuing on, calling over his shoulder to where his brothers followed though none of them were as yet in Harry's line of site. "Which way Charley?" Ron was using a lighting spell, the tip of his wand glowing brilliantly to enable him to see where he was placing his feet in this dim area of the forest.

Charley came into view the twins on his heels and glanced quickly around, getting his bearings. Before he could answer however that haunting whistling came again. Considering the events that had occurred last time it had been heard Charley dropped into a crouch and everyone glanced wildly about looking for trouble.

“Duck!” Ron yelled.

Something silver and vaguely giving the appearance of a spinning disk appeared, flying out of the woods ahead of them and whirling over their heads with an odd whistling hum. A great resounding crack echoed throughout the forest and a series of sharp reports as tree branches crashed into other branches drew all eyes up into the forest canopy. The sound of the tree falling sent them all scuttling backwards and they watched as the tree crashed to the ground ahead of them, coming to rest so that it effectively blocked one fork of the trail ahead.

Fred climbed to his feet and stared at the fallen giant then walked over to the tree as Charley checked on first Ron and then George. He had to push his way into the tangled mess of branches to angle himself so that he could get a good view of the tree trunk and the very neat, very precise cut

“Charley, I think we are being hunted. This was done on purpose not by mistake.”

Charley glanced at the tree, more concerned with picking himself up and eyeing the now blocked trail, which was the way he had intended to go. The tree had fallen in such a way that it blocked the access and unless he wanted to take his brothers over some very rugged and dangerous terrain he was not going to be going in that direction. To take the other fork was going to add unwanted time to reaching the most likely place to find the dragon.

“I think your right Fred.” He stared at the fallen tree, his frown deepening as he considered who would want to delay him or stop him from finding the dragon. It was for the creatures own safety that he was here hunting it.

Ron walk up and around the tree as far as he could go before the matt of broken and dangerous branches stopped him and then angled toward the other side, heading for the unblocked fork in the trail. "I..." he was cut off, as once again there was a weird whistling and the silver disk came back into view, this time aimed at another tree ahead of him. Felling that tree would block both forks. He backed a step and followed the arc of the disk and his eyes widened as he caught sight of the shadowed form.

"Charley! Third tree on my left!" Ron cried out bring his wand up to fire a spell at the tree, Fred and George quickly aiming their wands.

Charley was lightning fast, not wasting breath or time on replying but spinning to fire off three jinxes in quick succession. The spells were all aimed not at the figure itself but at the tree and at the branches surrounding branch where the person was sitting. The younger brothers followed his example, their jinx spells all aimed around the branch the person was seated on.

The sound of a body hitting the ground with a respectable thud followed was heard just before the crack of the tree hit by the spinning disk shattered the quiet of the forest. Fred and George both started to run as fast as they could to see who it was who had been attacking them.

Harry layed on the ground and stared up at the canopy of the tree above him and closed his eyes with a groan. That was a stupid mistake to make and he deserved the tumble for his carelessness.

'Next time I sit on a higher branch and don't be seen. There is nothing wrong with Ron's eyesight.' He could hear the sounds of the brothers as they came closer and he managed to draw his hood to shadow his face as Fred and George pounded closer.

Fred slipped and slithered to a stop, staring at the figure lying on the ground. It was a tall man who if he had been standing would have measured around 6' 3" tall. He remained lying on the ground, his silver armour glowing softly in the dim light, a metallic silver cloak around his shoulders and his face hidden beneath the cloak's hood. George came to a halt beside him and eyed the odd choice of clothing with disbelief.

Ron and Charley run up to join them and Charley winced but stopped himself from going to the man's aid. It was obvious that the fall had dislocated his left arm but he had to remember that this individual had been threatening the safety of his brothers. He could see about medical attention when he had some answers.

“Who are you and why have you been attacking us?” Charley growled his wand pointed at the man and looking as if he only wanted an excuse to fire off another spell.

The man stirred and barked out a short harsh laugh as he motioned behind Ron and Charley heard again that whistling and shoved Ron to the side even as he bellowed for George and Fred to get their heads down. The whistling filled the air and Charley looked over his shoulder to see the silver disk coming back at them fast and low, at waste high and he twisted, striking out at Fred to take him down flat to the ground as the disk came in at his back.

The stranger leapt to his feet and extended a hand, and the spinning disk resolved itself into a sword, which was caught neatly by the hilt. In a flash the figure threw itself at the nearest tree before any of the Weasley's could gain their feet.

“A word of advice. Never leave an enemy unguarded for a second. Time for this hunt to pick up the pace. You have until midnight to find this dragon or I assure you that you will never find her until I’m ready.” A wand appeared grasped awkwardly in the fingers of the dislocated arm and the stranger vanished then appeared on a tree further from the watching brothers, vanished again and was gone.

Fred slowly picked himself up and stared at the tree from which the stranger had vanished. After a moment he helped his older brother up and tried to calm his racing heart. He had caught the flash of that spinning sword just before Charley had kicked him clear.

"Thanks." He managed to whisper.

[illegible]

/ I hurt. Ah, Charley is quick. Guess you have to be when you hunt dragons. I know just how fast they can be. I... He got Fred out of the way. I just could not reach the sword in time. It... it would have killed Fred. I have to be more careful. /

Through a haze of pain that made it increasingly difficult for Harry to think let alone cast the repetitive modified summoning charm Harry moved through the forest, clinging to the need to reach Tonks and help. He needed something done about his shoulder and he heaved a sigh of relief as he glimpsed Silvenestri's gleaming hide through the trees.

Silvenestri was resting beside Tonks, curled up into a neat compact ball of gleaming muscle and silver hide, her tail wrapped tightly around her. Sitting with her back nestled to the warmth of the dragons hide and beside the huge wedge shaped head was Tonks, sing softly in a very sweet, low voice. For a moment Harry allowed the song to surround him, marvelling at the gentle sound that lulled the dragon to sleep and rest.

A soft sound stirred Tonks who stood and looked around the bulk of the dragon to see Harry hit the ground on the far side of the clearing, his left arm hanging at his side. With a soft gasp she moved away from the dragon. "Harry?"

"Tonks, please say you're good at healing charms?" Harry said driving his sword into the ground and pulling his hood back from his face.

"Ah, no, I'm not but I can get that shoulder back into position with out magic if you like?" Tonks hurried over to Harry and threw her arm around him, supporting him as she guided him to Silvenestri's side.

"Anything. Just do it!" Harry grated out past the flair of pain where her hand rested against his shoulder. The pain he had been suppressing in the need for immediate action finally breaking from his control and hitting him full force. He closed his eyes against the pain that was flaring thought his shoulder and telling himself to hold still and take whatever Tonks needed to do.

Tonks felt around the shoulder joint well aware of the pain she must be causing Harry and when she was sure that there were no ligaments in the way to pinch she grasped his arm and began to rotate the arm. She could clearly see the sweat breaking out on Harry's face and heard the hiss of breath at the flare of pain and with a sharp short motion she popped the arm back into place. Harry gasped but otherwise made no sound that might alert anyone who might be in the vicinity. She had no idea if he had succeeded in turning the hunters aside.

"That is the best that I can do here. It will need time to heal and you really should see Madam Pomfrey and get it properly checked." She ran a hand over Harry's good shoulder.

Harry shakes his head and carefully took a series of slow and deepening breathes until he trusted himself to speak. "Can't now. Charley... Charley and his brothers are about a half-hour away from here. I have to keep them occupied. I can see that Silvenestri needs another few hours before she is recovered."

Tonks looked up at the open area of sky, judging by the light that the sun was approaching early evening and would be soon setting. The day had seemed so long to her, but perhaps it had raced for Harry.

"Well... If you like I can help slow them down? What have you been doing so far?"

Silvenestri stirred, one lid lifting and Harry reached out to stroke her back to somnolence. "Shhh. Sleep and get well. We can manage."

Harry tested his arm, pleased that the excruciating pain had abated somewhat but the arm was stiff and sore and he knew that he was going to be restricted. There was no help for it however. It was not an injury he had ever sustained before and he fervently hoped he would never again have a dislocated shoulder.

"Nothing much I can do if I do not want to openly confront them. I've just dropped some branches and a tree of two in their path. I... have been trying not to cause any injuries." He tried to ignore the vision of his sword coming in at Fred's back and again blessed Charlie's quick reflexes. "I don't think I have much of a choice at the moment. I will





Silverscale, athenakitty, David M. Potter, bandgsecurtiyaw, lucy-lollipop, Kayasha, Delta T, Darkepyon, jollander, jollander, Musings-of-Apathy, highbrass, Fire Gazer, padfootstwin2, DANIELC, gaul1, Bobboky, phoenix catcher, Dobbey, fireflashphoenix, bommor, Zesuit, Nocez, Aria-Chan, benwa, Eagle-Eyes, mosleyn001.

## Chapter 16: Pride and Honor.

/ Telepath /

Charley had taken a few minutes to ensure that none of his brothers had been injured and then positioned them to keep watch so that they could not easily be surprised again. He was disturbed by the armour-clad stranger and how close he had come to losing a brother. He did not think that the man had actually intended to hurt any of them. The trees had all fallen clear of the group after all and he had given Charlie enough time to get Fred out of harms way but it had been close.

He was now squatting on his heels in the exact place where the stranger had fallen not too long ago. He had to trust his brothers to give him fair warning if the stranger returned and he was really worried about Ron. He was way too young to be out in the woods hunting dragons with the added and previously unsuspected difficulty of this stranger haunting the woods. That there was a link between the dragon and the stranger was not in doubt. The man had said as much, whether he had intended to or not was a matter he could consider later.

He dearly wanted to know who this man was. It was not only the armour and sword that made him curious but the magic. This stranger seemed to have a most unusual twist on the use of summoning charms - he had felt the type of magic cast and that curious twist that had moved the man, not the tree. It was intriguing and to add to that curiosity there was this clear indication that the stranger was not what he appeared.

Charley looked again at the impact marks the man had made when he hit the ground and at the point where he had stood to grasp the sword. The impression the body had made when it had hit the ground left no doubt in his mind that the man was far smaller than he had appeared to be. He had been shielded by an illusion and a very convincing one it had been.

“Well this guy knows his spells. What we were seeing was not his true face or form, so keep you eyes open and stay together.” He shot a meaningful look at each of his brothers who acknowledged his

caution with a nod then stood and looked up at the tree from which the stranger had made his escape. Flicking his hand at the tree he motioned them to move off. "We follow the same course. Keep your eyes and ears open."

Ron and the others nodded as they started to walk along in the same general direction as the stranger had retreated each hoping that the injuries he had sustained in the fall would slow him down and perhaps force him to leave them alone for a time.

Half an hour of slowly and cautiously moving through the forest found them deep within the most ancient parts of the woods. Charlie paused, motioning for everyone to halt and listened intently to something he knew intently. The low sound of a dragon's breath in deep sleep was well known to him but he detected something else in that sound and he scowled.

"Be aware that the beast is ahead and that it's sick. The breathing does not sound healthy and don't for an instant think that a sick dragon is an easy dragon to take. Exactly the opposite is true. A sick dragon is more likely to kill you than a healthy one."

He was looking specifically at Ron when he voiced his warning and then his gaze wandered to the twins who were very serious looking, unlike their usual selves. If he did not tackle the problem of the dragon now and took them back to Hogwarts he knew that he would probably never have so good a chance to capture the beast and attend to its illness. He had come so close already to losing Fred and he did not want to have to tell his mother how he lost one or more of his brothers if anything should happen.

Just then the whistling sound came back this time louder and faster than before. "Down!" George screamed as the disk came flying out of the woods to their left.

The disk went flying over their heads and with a high pitched whine cut not one but two trees in its pass dropping them so that they formed a V with the brothers standing at the mouth of the V, clear of the branches by only a few feet.

Fred scrambled to his feet first and looked at the damage and turned, searching for any sign of the wielder of that most unusual weapon. He saw the man standing at the tip of the V where he certainly had not been standing moments ago and next to him was a cloaked figure that nimbly ran the length of the tree. Something about this second figure suggested a female, perhaps the way that she stood, feet primly together as fine fingers grasped the cloak tightly to her before she leapt lightly to the opposite tree in the V.

The man was standing on the tree to the right of the brothers, his sword resting easily in his hand while the woman took up a position on the second tree. The cloak very effectively hid her face from them but her wand was out and it was clear that she was ready to fight.

"I thought I'd even the odds a little." He stood in shadow, watching the four brothers and in a half crouch, ready for any move they made and it seemed to Fred that he watched Charlie in particular. "None of you have any major combat training, that not being your specialty so instead of issuing a challenge for a duel I thought that the two of us would entertain you with a game of Catch Me If You Can until midnight."

The man smirked as he jumping down from the tree into the V, placing the woman behind him. His strange double bladed sword rested in one hand, the upper blade along his upper arm, lower blade extended out as a shield for the woman who stood with her wand at the ready.

Ron looked up from where, he lay half covered by Charlie who had tackled him to get him out of possible harms way when the sword had hacked into the trees. Some of the cloud that seemed to perpetually hang over the deeper woods of the Forbidden Forest broke up, allowing the light of the setting sun to penetrate despite the trees thick canopy. His eyes widened as he found himself staring at an unmistakable 5'8" tall man with hair and eyes he knew only too well.

"Wait a minute... Harry! What are you doing here?" He yelled as Harry suddenly found himself standing in the stream of light from the setting sun.

Fred and George looked at Ron then at Harry who seemed to glare at the sun and then walked towards them, the woman right behind him, her eyes looking all round but flicked back to them. None of them seemed to notice that Charlie was only now beginning to stir and that he seemed groggy, not quite aware of what was going on.

“Hey mate, what are you doing here and dressed like that?” Fred eyed Harry in his armour, sword still at the ready.

“Hey, Fred. George.” Harry nodded amicably. “Long time no see. Let’s get this match started shall we? You four against us two if you win the dragons yours to try and take. If we win you’re minds will be modified so you don’t remember seeing me here. Sound fair?” Harry grinned at them and Tonks moved off the tree trunk to stand beside him.

Charley shook his head, aware of voices around him and that Ron was shaking his shoulder and urging him to stand up. Still somewhat dazed by hitting his head solidly against the ground he looked at Harry, taking in his armour and the twin-bladed sword then the woman in the silver cloak he recognised from earlier.

George, ever the fun loving gambler gave his older brother a thoughtful look, noting Charley seemed unaware of what was happening. He decided to stall for time. “One condition. We get to see who your friend is first.”

Harry smiled and looked at the woman beside him. “Do you care to show yourself, My Love?” he whispered, a large smile on his face.

The woman nodded and pulled back her hood to show the true face and hair of Tonks beneath the cowl. “Of course, Love. After all they’re going to lose.” She smiled at the looks on the faces of the three brothers, hoping that Charlie would stay out of it for a little longer. The younger boys were going to be much easier to handle.

Ron and the twins looked at the woman, none of them recognizing her but Charlie seemed to shake himself, staring at the face he had rarely seen. “Tonks? Why are you and Harry here?”

Tonks placed her head on Harry's shoulder and placed a quick kiss on his cheek as her arms slipped around his chest. "Because he love's me for what I am, not for what I could be as you did Charley. Silvenestri is the dragon you are hunting and she is like a sister to me. I will not permit you to take her from her friends."

Charley seemed to waver, rubbing at his head for a moment, trying to dispel the ringing in his ears as he studied the couple. The sight of the forest wavered around him and was overlaid by a room crowded with people and by an explosion of magic that set a deep chord of fear within him. Memory surged back, further staggering him, making the entire situation otherworldly and he was suddenly very afraid for his younger brothers. Something was very wrong with all of this and if only he could focus he could make certain that his brothers were unharmed.

"Guy's we can't beat them." He fought down the fear, determined to gain control of legs that did not want to support his weight no matter how he tried to stand.

Ron was trying to help him up and he saw Harry recognise that he remembered and curse as he realised that the memory charm no longer worked. Yes, he was remembering more and more every second, and what he remembered made him very afraid for his brothers.

Harry cursed softly and exchanged a glance with Tonks, both of them aware that Charlie remembered what had happened and needing to do something before he recovered from the fall.

Ron looked at his brother in disbelief, letting go and Charlie crumpled to the ground again with a muffled yelp of pain. "What do you mean we can't beat them? We out number them two to one! How can they beat us?"

Charlie lurched to his feet, supporting his weight against a rock for a moment as he tried to recover. His head was pounding and he felt that he would be ill very soon now and he must get his brothers to run before it was too late.

“You have no idea of what Harry is. He’s beyond anyone’s power but Dumbledore and You-Know-Who. Maybe not even they can stand against him now. Back up and hope you can keep most of your memories intact.” Charley hissed at his brothers and lunging to the side he managed to pull the twins back away from Harry, his voice showing the very real fear he felt at the power that Harry was starting to show in his aura. Charlie knew running was hopeless and he only hoped that a second dose of this unknown and potent charm would not leave him a vegetable. Maybe his brothers would be okay.

Ron looked at his older brothers as though he did not know him and then at Harry who was looking at them with a patently bored expression.

“I can take him!” Ron screamed and launched into an attack with his fist aimed at Harry’s jaw and two charms at the same time.

A feral grin split Harry’s mouth and he jumped aside, one arm snaking around Tonks and the other holding his sword. The charms and Ron’s fist missed him.

“At last! Someone willing to fight me for his pride and not his power!” He landed neatly on the left tree and let go of Tonks and handed her his sword then jumped back down so that he was standing in front of Ron. “So tell me. Why are you fighting Ron? What drives you to fight the last of the Dragon Lord’s?” Harry permitted the next charm to hit him in the chest to show that his armour had a lot more to it than just looks.

“You bastard Harry! Stop playing with him before you break his spirit.” Charlie snarled, taking a wobbly step forward and Fred caught him before he sprawled on the ground.

“You took Hermione away from me! You’re always getting all the good luck! You’re always the golden boy. Your rich and no one is as good as Harry Potter!” Ron screamed, dropping his wand and started to throw punches and kicks as fast as he could. Over the summer he had been given some instruction in close quarters fighting by members of the Order and he threw everything he had at the armoured figure.



Charley groaned against Fred, trying to force down that pounding headache that was making the scene before him waver with red and black patches. He had to stop this before Ron got hurt and he wished that he had never agreed to bring any of them on this hunt. It would have been better if he had come alone.

"I did nothing to Hermione. You were the one who cheated while dating her and she found out. I didn't tell her. As for the good luck and the money, well, you can have it. Now show me what you got!" Harry dodged all of Ron's attacks or blocked them while Fred and George, pale and looking sick, dragged Charley out of the way.

Ron actually surprised him as he was rather good for having had so little instruction and Harry was thankful that the Dragon Lords had their own style of hand to hand combat. It gave him an advantage over Ron as he knew something of the style Ron was using but Ron knew nothing of what he faced. He chose to ignore Charlie cursing at him and calling to him to remember who he was and to fight against 'it'. Did Charlie really think that he was enchanted? Perhaps by the armour he wore? Was that what Charley thought?

He would deal with the others after he had taught Ron a lesson as he was rather testy with Ron. Harry thought back to a little over three weeks ago when Hermione and Ron had broken up. Easily blocking a kick he remembered what had happened and how Hermione had been hurt.

## Flashback

Harry was sitting in Tonks room dressed in a bathrobe while he was reading a book on charms. Tonks was asleep on the bed, the silk sheets covering her naked form. Her face was turned towards Harry and her brown hair flowed down her back looked delightfully mussed. One arm rested across the mattress reaching out to where Harry had been lying before he had risen to read the book.

He wished that Tonks could have seen him before the time spell had regressed his body to his current age once more and decided that he really needed to push himself harder to develop the physique he had formerly had. He rather hated living in the body of a sixteen year old again.

Harry had just finished another page of his book when Hermione had came running into the room without even knocking and threw herself into his arms crying. Stunned he had stared at the girl who seemed totally unaware of his lack of proper clothing or that Tonks was only sleeping a few feet away from them.

"Hermione what's wrong?" Harry said to the sobbing girl in his arms while running a gentle hand through her hair. The book landed on the floor at his feet while his free arm eased around her shaking shoulders as he tried to calm her down to find out what had happened.

"Ron." More a wail than an explanation was enough to inform Harry that Ron had done something to hurt Hermione. Even after he had told Ron what would happen if he ever hurt Hermione in any way Ron still had done something to upset her.

"What did he do Hermione?" Harry said gentle, running a hand over the side of her face and wiping away the tears of the young woman he thought of as the sister he never had. He would always consider Hermione to be his sister more than merely a friend.

Hermione had looked up at Harry and in a quite voice broken by sobs had whispered, "I was in the library looking something up for my homework... I... I went back to the common room and... and I saw Ron... Ron and Lavender. They were kissing in front of the fire and... It was not just an innocent kiss but an all out snogging session. I... I just snapped and run. Oh God, Harry. I... I can't believe it. I thought we could work."

Hermione was again lost in sobs with her face buried against Harry's shoulder and unmindful of how Tonks had woken during her explanation and was now looking at them from the bed, her face caught in her natural look.

Harry looked about ready to do Ron a mischief for cheating on Hermione but said nothing merely continued to rub her back soothingly. He sensed that Tonks had awoken and after a moment looked over his shoulder and met her gaze.

'I'll take care of it.' He mouthed to her before he returned his attention to Hermione and held her gently, rocking until she fell asleep in his arms.

He remained in his seat with Hermione curled against him while Tonks dressed and watched them a sad look on her face. He was going to have to have words with Ron and from the look on Tonk's face he surmised that she too might be paying Ron a little visit tomorrow.

End Flashback

"You're lying! She did not catch me with Lavender and even if she did what's it to you? It's none of your business. You told her and made her leave me. It always has to go your way and you never liked the idea of me and Hermione. She was always too good for the likes of me." Ron snarled as one well placed kick hit Harry solidly in the side throwing, him off balance and to the left.

Harry grunted at the impact and steadied himself. Looking down at himself to make certain that his armour had taken the blow without so much as a dent for all of the force behind the kick. "Very good move, Ron. However if you want to do real damage you're going to have to hit me somewhere where I'm not armoured. That means it has to be the head." Harry dodged the next four attacks. "If you want my wealth, Ron, beat me and I'll give you the vault key."

"Fuck your money Mr Perfect!" Ron snarled and launched another attack sequence aiming for Harry's head since it was patently obvious even in his rage that any attacks directed at his body and legs had no effect except to make Harry grin wider.

"Stop it! Stop it before one of you gets hurt." Fred shouted.

Tonks frowned at the two boys, one in every day clothing and the other in armour. It was a farce and she knew it. Harry was only playing for time to delay them and she remembered what Charlie had shouted about breaking his brother's spirit. Any enjoyment she had had in the contest was long gone though she thought it might be a good thing for them to fight it out.

Ron had blamed Harry for the break up with Hermione and Harry had wanted to tear Ron limb from limb for weeks now. Some days they were almost normal and other times they poisoned the very air with venomous looks.

Charley looked decidedly ill but was slowly regaining control of himself though she suspected he was still too confused by the blow to his head to safely cast magic. She would have to keep an eye on him in case he decided to chance a spell and she saw that George had his wand drawn and looked be torn deciding if he should cast the charm, whatever it might be, on Harry or his brother.

They continued to fight, Ron's vibrant red hair becoming plastered to his head with sweat and Harry was panting though not so exhausted. The magic of the armour protected him and she knew that Ron was going to be battered and bruised but Harry too would carry a few bruises.

"Give." Harry panted.

"No." Ron gasped as they faced off from a wrestling bout.

"Give." Harry snapped. "You can't win."

"Not about winning." Ron whispered and flung himself at Harry.

Harry grunted as he dropped low and spun. Flashing out a leg and well placed foot to sweep Ron's feet out from under him. Ron growled and clambered up to his feet and came on again, managing to push Harry back and they clinched.

Tonks glanced up at the sky, now growing darker and knew the day was growing late. This had gone on long enough and from the look of him Charley thought so too, though he looked a lot worse than Ron. George and Fred still steadied Charlie, but they were practical boys and they knew when to leave a fight and when to join in. This was a purely personal fight between friends who really wanted to remain friends and had to find some way to gain respect for each other again.

When it ended it ended abruptly, a charge from Ron that was stopped when Harry went down to one knee, arm bent and planted his elbow

in Ron's unprotected midrift. Ron went down, gasping for air, gaping like a fish out of water and George leapt forward.

“Enough! That’s it. Came over.”

“I do believe I win.” Harry puffed, surprised that Ron could put up so good a fight and personally relieved that it was all over.

He had discovered that it was not so much fun fighting someone who had always accepted him. Where had he and Ron gone wrong? It was surely more than the break up with Hermione who seemed to be dealing well with what had happened after that long bout of tears. In fact Hermione seemed to have dealt with it better than he had. He glanced up at the sky and grunted softly. Maybe now it would be over and they could be friends again? If the charm did not interfere but he had to use the charm to keep Silvenestri safe. Well, he would simply have to deal with the situation and hope that Ron could too.

“Now for the final call.” Harry straightened, holding up his hand as Tonks jumped down and walked over to him and they stood together as they had done before the fight.

“Satisfied?” Tonks murmured.

George pulled Ron to his feet and over to where Fred supported Charley. The older Weasley reached for his youngest brother but a movement from Harry had Charley stumbling back. Harry's hand glowed with yellow light and he remembered what had happened last time he had seen that glow. Silently Charley hoped that he would remember his brothers, indeed that he would be capable of functioning after being hit a second time by this unknown but powerful charm.

"It's time," Harry murmured, as a bright flash lit the clearing.

When Tonks could see again the Weasley were gone.

[illegible]

As the last rays of the setting sun touched the edge of the Forbidden Forest Fred and George Weasley stumbled supporting Charley and Ron. Staggering through the last of the trees they looked around them in a daze as a shout from Hagrid reached them and then there were people all around them. Questions were fired rapidly at the two boys who could only shake their heads that they really could not remember what had happened.

Ron complained of a sore chest and was battered and bruised as though he had either been in a fight or taken a good tumble and Madam Pomfrey was summoned to look him over. The twins watched in a daze as their little brother was taken away, as was Charley who seemed in no better condition than Ron and who had not seemed to recognise anyone.

The coherent brothers were escorted to Dumbledore's study where they found to their great surprise a single Dragon scale of purest silver in Fred's pocket. Neither of the brothers could explain to the Professors in attendance where they had found the scale and finally were sent to bed in a guest room, leaving the headmaster of Hogwarts to sit before a roaring fire lost in thought

[illegible]

Tonks looked around to see Harry sitting on a boulder not far from where Silvenestri slumbered, unaware of the events of the afternoon. He looked to be deep in thought as he rubbed at the split lip Ron had given him.

“You are quiet. Do you feel alright?”

“Yes. Yes, I am alright. He... put up a better fight than I thought. I keep forgetting that this body is not what it used to be.”

“It looks just fine to me.” Tonks grinned. “Well, then, if you have gotten all of that anger at Ron out of your system, what should we do to keep ourselves occupied until Silvenestri is rested?”

Harry sighed and smiled at her, tilting his head to better see her face and leaned closer to kiss her gently then pulled her closer, encircling

her with his arms. “I can think of something that we could do.” He murmured into her ear, his hands moving suggestively over her body in just the way he knew she liked.

Tonks smiled and kissed him then hooked a thumb over her shoulder at the shadowy form in the darkness.

“Not in front of the children, dear.” She grinned.

Laughing softly Harry took her hand and led her out of the clearing and to a small glade he knew of where the grass was soft underfoot and they could be assured of privacy. It was here that Silvenestri in her human form surprised them some hours later, laughing at them when they blushed for being caught lying naked under the silver cloak.

[illegible]

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## Chapter 17: Four Elements and the Forgotten.

/ Telepathic /

24 December 1996 10:05 AM A.D

Harry was working in the Room of Requirements on the last of the rings he would gift his friends with for Christmas. The room bore a striking resemblance to his old cave workshop back in the past right down to Silvenestri's old bedding nock in the main cave. There was one difference though, a large table was placed in the middle of the room with the finely crafted tools used by jewellers scattered over it in apparent disarray.

The ring he was working on was a silver band with his symbol etched onto the face of it. The dragon's delicate eye socket had a single drop of mercury within it that, if the activation spell worked as he believed it would, should cause the mercury to turn red when danger was near. The ring should also let the wearer know when he needed them.

Harry nodded at his handy work and looked over at the ten rings he had already completed. They were set out in a neat row and one was separate from the others, set a little to one side. Unlike the other nine this one ring had a diamond inset into the dragon's eye and not a drop of mercury, as had the others. Nor was the gem the only difference as this ring was crafted not from silver but from white gold.

"I hope she likes it." He whispered to the room at large.

Just then there was a knock on the door followed by Professor McGonagall's voice. "Mr. Potter, Professor Dumbledore would like to talk with you now."

Harry walked over to the door and opened it carefully so that he could stick his head out of the room but not allow his Professor to see into the room. He was not quite ready for anyone to see his work. "I'll be there in a minute Professor."

Before she could say anything Harry went back in, the door closed behind him and he fetched his cloak and the rings, whisking them into a pocket. Professor McGonagall was still standing in the hallway



waiting for him and her hands rested on her hips and she watched him with narrowed eyes.

“Mr. Potter what have you been doing in there for the past month?” McGonagall asked as they’ve walked down to Dumbledore’s office, Harry’s cloak blowing gently in the light wind that somehow always managed to get through the cracks in the castle walls.

“Oh, nothing major Professor. Just working on my spells and skills for the day I face Voldemort.” Harry said as they’ve arrived at Dumbledore’s office door.

Minerva nodded a short sharp motion and her gaze rested on him for one very intense moment before she uttered the password. As she turned and left Harry and Dumbledore to talk she was frowning and thinking that Harry had been acting very strange lately but she reflected that these were strange and troubling times. They all had much on their minds with the threat of Voldemort and just now she was looking forward to the kettle that should be boiling in her office and the makings of a nice cup of tea to warm her up on this cold December day.

Harry sighed softly as he walked up the stairs and into Professor Dumbledore’s office without knocking and managed to hide his surprise to see his headmaster sitting behind his desk with none other than Charley Weasley and the twins standing behind him.

“You wanted to see me Professor?” Harry said when he had taken a seat in front of them all, his cloak rattling a little from the rings he had in it. He unobtrusively grasped the pocket to quiet the rings as he settled into his seat. ‘I’m relieved that my spell didn’t hurt him, just knock him out for a little while. I will have to be careful with magic as powerful as that not to hurt someone and Charley has been exposed to it twice. I don’t think he could recover so well from a third time.’ He thought, giving Charley a brief nod, which was returned with an equally faint response.

“Ah, yes Harry. We were just talking about that dragon in the Forbidden Forest that Charley here has thus far been unsuccessfully trying to catch.” He nodded briefly to Harry then quietly spoke to Charley who nodded and then the professor dismissed the Weasley’s

and turned back to Harry. "Now Harry, I and some of the staff were wondering where you have gotten some of your powers and what you have been up to this summer. Tonks is being singularly uncooperative at the moment and not informing the teaching staff of your progress. We must be aware at all times that these are dangerous times. Unsettled times and that to face what is to come we must all have confidence in each other and in our respective abilities."

Harry looked at Dumbledore and wondered if the Professor actually expected him to tell all of his secrets but he had more respect for the professor than to merely jump to conclusions and even as he thought it he could feel the first tentative touches against his defenses. Dumbledore was trying to penetrate his mental defenses. Was this a serious attempt to learn his secrets or was Dumbledore merely testing how well he had studied under Tonks?

Deciding to not jump to conclusions and perhaps give something away Harry strengthened his mental defenses and waited to see what developed. "Well, if you haven't guessed I am now reasonably able at the skill of Occlumency. I am quite capable of blocking your mind and anything else is my affair not yours."

A smile twitched at the corner of the Headmasters lips, hidden by the flowing beard and moustache. "Indeed? There are matters that we are going to need to discuss at some point, young Harry. You have more than doubled your power sense this last year and it seems to be a rather remarkable side effect that everyone who has been with you lately is also growing in power. For example Tonks' mind shield was never that powerful until she started to teach you. Miss Granger's Charm work has doubled as well and there have been notable improvements in her other classes. Now is it not entirely reasonable, Harry, that the teaching staff should notice these improvements?" Dumbledore slipped a tendril of thought against the mental barrier that Harry maintained, feeling along the 'wall' for any hint of weakness. "Perhaps there is something you need to tell us, Harry?"

Harry almost found himself squirming under those sparkling eyes. Dumbledore seemed to be amused by the entire affair and Harry could not decide if that was a good thing or not. With the Headmaster one could never tell. Hoping he was not in for a fall because he knew

that he was so much younger than the man seated across from him, he smiled at Dumbledore and continued to maintain the barrier. It was rather disconcerting to be seated here and to feel that light touch on his mind and while disconcerting it was becoming rather amusing. He found himself playing with the touch, opening the barrier, not long enough for Dumbledore to enter but enough to make his awareness of just where the other man's touch was obvious. Open, flick closed, open, flick closed. Yes, this could be fun.

“Nothing Professor. Can I go?”

For a long moment Dumbledore watched him, noting the growing ease with which Harry evaded contact with him and he resisted the urge to smile. He had learned what he needed to know for now and motioned toward the door in dismissal. Yes, Harry was growing up. Developing and that was good for Voldemort would not long give them respite. He needed the boy strong.

“You may indeed, Mr Potter.”

He waited for Harry to leave the office and for the always-observant gallery of headmasters to lose interest in any possible reactions he might have before he permitted the smile to show. He had work to do but he was indeed very pleased with the little game of hide and go seek Harry had just played with his mind.

“Little rascal was enjoying that to much.” He chuckled, looking back down at the papers on his desk.

[illegible]

Harry was sitting in Rowena's room later that day with a book on rune magic open in front of him. He was searching through the extensive library Rowena had gathered for a spell that would enable him to learn if ancient allies of the Dragon Lords still existed in the present time. He had been taught that those he sought had escaped to a hidden place, possibly within another dimension or at least behind powerful barriers. He needed to learn if they had survived or if somewhere in the mists of time they had succumbed and he would have no assistance from them for the coming conflict.

Rowena was seated across from Harry also reading a book of rune magic to help find what he was looking for. "Well, this one is another dead end." She rose gracefully and moved to the bookshelf, replacing the read tome and pulling down another. Her attention was centred on Harry and she did not look as she moved the books around with a casual flick of the wrist and a light touch of magic.

Harry sighed softly and continued to read. He was acutely aware of the time this search was taking but knew that he had to be patient and keep reading until he found either a spell or a ritual that would permit him to discover the answers to his questions. He needed to locate a spell that would enable him to summon a leader of any race, the race to be stipulated at the casting of the spell, to him. He needed to summon the individual and hold it stable no matter where that subject originated from, whether from this reality or some parallel world. It was a rare magic and for that reason they searched the tomes containing the rarest of castings.

Turning a page in the tome his eyes lighted on the intricate symbols and he sat up straighter in his seat, eyes running quickly over the description until he was certain that he was not mistaken. He had had false alarms before and he was not going to be fooled again.

"Got it." Harry cried as he stood up and carried the book over to Rowena who had settled once again in her seat and was leafing through her new book.

"According to this all we will need is four elemental circles plus the focus - which we have already. We will need four people to chant the spell and... ah. Four ingredients are required. The feather of a Phoenix a Hair from the mane of a Unicorn, Scales of a Merfolk and the feather of a Hippogriff. If this spell is said properly then we will have a leader of any race stated held within the focus circle ready for us to talk to."

Rowena smiled at Harry. "Well, you have the circles and three people to say the spell not counting yourself. All you need is the ingredients. Now where are you going to get them?"

Harry glanced up from the book and smiled at her "Well, the Unicorn hair should not be a problem. Hermione can get that from the

Forbidden Forest. She should be fine with her wand and that cloak I gave her for her birthday present. The scales from a Merfolk likewise should not be too big a drama. Silvenestri can get those since she can breathe under water longer than any spell I can cast. The Hippogriff feather Tonks can get from....” Harry stopped thinking that he was going to be sending Tonks to Number 12 Grimmauld for a feather from Buckbeak and Sirius would not be there. Everything had changed with the death of his Godfather.

Rowena nodded, understanding and finished the sentence for him “She can fetch a feather from your godfather’s house. Where are you intending to get the Phoenix feather?” she asked wishing she could touch him to offer some comfort.

Harry managed a smile that turned into a smirk. "From here of course."

“Oh? Where? I hope you don’t mean Fawkes.” Rowena sat up straight in her chair, closing the tome before her as she looked at Harry and the smirk. “I take that back. Of course you mean Fawkes. What other Phoenix is there within Hogwarts for you to steal a feather from?”

Harry's smile grew even bigger. "Of course I mean to get one from Fawkes... Tonight."

Rowena looked horrified but nodded and watched as Harry left the room no doubt to give his friends the jobs needed for the ritual to be completed.

[illegible]

Hermione Granger was not amused.

Hermione decided she did not like this plan at all. The first thing that she had against it was that she was now walking into the Forbidden Forest. A second problem with the plan was that she was doing so at night. Why was she wandering around the Forbidden Forest at all hours of the night?

“Because bloody Harry Potter wants a hair from a horses mane. And not just any horse will do either. Noooo. It has to be a Unicorn. Why am I a virgin? If I wasn’t a virgin I would not be trudging through the damn fool forest at night looking for a Unicorn. For all I know the one I find... eventually... might be gay. Oh, that would be lovely. That would give his majesty the Dragon Lord a problem, wouldn’t it? For sure the unicorn would see him coming and laugh itself sick. Who started this stupid rumor about Unicorns and virgins anyway?”

Muttering softly to herself as she picked her way through the dark tangled roots of the forest giants she thought that she would much prefer to be attending to one of the other tasks that needed doing. Tonks had taken herself off to London to fetch a feather from the hippogriff Buckbeak and Silvenestri and gone into the lake to seek out Merfolk scales. While, admittedly it would have been a problem for her to go into the lake she was perfectly capable of finding her way around London.

“As for Harry ... Well... Just where has Mr. Harry bossy Potter gone?” He vanished not long after telling them what he needed from them without a word to explain his plans, giving Hermione no time to protest her assignment. Some days she worried that Harry was becoming too full of himself. It simply was not the Harry that she knew.

Hermione paused, looking around at the twisted trunks and knotted roots of the trees and shuddered. There were ‘things’ in the Forbidden forest that she did not want to meet and she was so going to have words with Harry when she made it back to Hogwarts. Just where in this tangled mass of vegetation was she to find a Unicorn?

“Well, I can only hope they are not too far in.” She whispered and started to walk deeper into the forest. “Why did it have to be at night? It’s bad enough during the day in here but at night... I hate you, Harry.”

Hermione had only just started to walk again when the sound of singing disrupted the eerie quiet of the forest. Hermione clenched her teeth as the very out of tune caterwauling caused shudders to run up and down her spine. It sounded disturbingly similar to a dog howling

in pain. Turning around quickly Hermione sighed when she saw Hagrid walking up to her a smile on his face.

"Hello Hermione. Now what are you doing here after dark?" Hagrid held his huge crossbow against his shoulder as he studied the girl, then his eyes flicked over the darkened forest about them. "It's not safe in here for you."

Hermione looked around the darkened forest, briefly entertaining the notion of making a run for it but dismissed the idea with a sigh. Hagrid knew the forest better than anyone and escaping him here would be next to impossible.

"Good evening, Hagrid. I'm out here to find some Unicorn hair. Hair from the mane of a Unicorn for a proj..."

"You mean for Harry and that Dragon of his." Hagrid cut her off and tsk'ed softly at her panicked look. "No need to worry, Hermione. I won't be tell'in anyone. Before you say anything I should tell you I've known about Harry and that dragon ever since Charley Weasley and his brothers first tried catchin' it. I was in the forest that day and I saw everythin'." Hagrid's shaggy head shook slowly from side to side as he studied the girl. "Not pretty that but believe me, Harry really did hold back from what I've read about his kind. They were not the nicest of people, Dragon Lords. I'm hop'in that Harry won't be turnin' into one of them and forgettin' his friends."

Hermione sighed and hugged Hagrid tightly, feeling immeasurably safer with the huge man standing protectively beside her. "Thank you Hagrid, for not saying anything. He's still Harry. I've read the legends too but believe me, he's still our Harry. I have to get the hair from the unicorn. It is very important."

Hagrid smiled down at her as he considered the slender young woman she had become over the years and with a deep grunt he motioned off into the depths of the forest and started to lead her into the forest's heart. "I dare say it is. Something to be used against Him, I expect. Come on. I'll help you."

Hermione nodded and set off after Hagrid, who smiled down at her as she caught a firm grip on a fold of his coat. Hermione kept close to





form from those who lived in the world above Silvenestri initiated the physical transformation. /Delightfully bracing./

The darkness of the water was no impediment to draconic eyes, which shone like jewels in the lake. Using her wings she almost flew through the water, the slow sweep of the mighty wings propelling her through the water with little effort.

She could taste the merfolk in the water and it proved no difficulty to locate the city. The strange lights used by the folk illuminated the city in a soft glow and she found it oddly beautiful to behold. It was a very different world to the world of the humans.

/Bingo. Now to get those scales and I wonder if I am going to have any arguments over my errand/

It was no surprise that there was a stir in the city or that the city guard was assembling between her and the city. Each of the guard carried long tridents and many of them were shaking out nets but none of them looked happy to see a dragon. None of them looked happy about having to face one either but they faced her with bravery and a tall Merman with a trident in one hand and a net in the other swam forward, marking himself as a leader amid the group. He stopped a respectful distance from the shimmering dragon who now rested on the floor of the lake, even going so far as to offer her a small respectful bow.

/This one is brave. He shows respect./

“With respect, O Silver One, who are you?” he spoke in his native tongue, one webbed hand clasped tightly around the trident.

Silvenestri considered him for a long moment before she lowered her head closer to his level and making use of her power answered him, mind to mind. “I come seeking scales from one of your people. I have a need that must be fulfilled.”

The merman looked at the dragon for a long time and half turned as an older Merman swam up to them. “What say you, Elder? The dragon asks for the scales from one of us and then she will leave. Shall we do as she asks and give to her of our skin?”

The elder hovered beside the guard for a moment and turned aged eyes to the dragon. After a moment he swam up closer to Silvenestri and settling his feet to the lake bottom he bowed low to her. "You may have the scales of one of we who are old. It would be an honour to provide you with so simple a need. How many scales would the Great One need?" His voice remained firm and strong though it was wispy with age and there appeared to be no fear in him.

Silvenestri lowered her head to rest eye ball to eye ball with the old merman and nodded after all Harry had not stipulated that the scales must come from a male or female, young or old. He had simply said he wanted the scales of a merfolk. If he wanted something more specific then he should have said so.

“Just a human hand full, Old One.”

The old merman nodded and reached down to his own tail where he pulled off some of his scales, wincing at each tug and when he had removed five of the scales he handed them over to Silvenestri. The dragon dipped her head respectfully to the Elder who bowed in turn to her and watched as the shimmering dragon started for the surface.

[illegible]

Tonks landed on the floor of Number 12 Grimmauld Place with a thud. She had travelled by the by floo system from Hogsmeade, not wishing to alert anyone at Hogwarts to her journey at this time. Looking around the room it was clear to see that Mrs Weasley has been working on the house. The walls were freshly painted and new furniture was in the room. Climbing to her feet as she looked around Tonks thought that the room certainly looked better when the door was thrust open and Molly Weasley marched in, her wand at the ready.

“Tonks! What a relief. What are you doing here, dear? Nothing happened at the school I hope?” Molly quickly walked up to Tonks and performed a clearing charm on her. “There, that’s better.”

“No, nothing is wrong. I just stopped by for some of my thing that I left here over the summer.” Tonks offered a brief smile before walking by

Molly and into the hall. She walked past the portrait of Mrs Black who, she noticed had a silencing charm cast on her to keep her quiet.

"That's fine, Dear. I'm working in the kitchen if you need anything."

Tonks hurried up the stairs and to Sirius's room where Buckbeak was being kept. Swallowing uneasily Tonks offered a deep bow to the regal creature that considered her over his dinner bowl of rats, blinking at her before he shook himself and returned the bow.

"Hey there, Big Guy. If you don't mind I just need one of you feathers that you've moulted up here. It's for a good cause and then I'll be gone and leave you to your dinner."

She said looked around the room at the few feathers scattered around the room. The Hippogriff's make shift stable had obviously recently been cleaned but there were a few feathers remaining and she hoped to find one that was in good condition. Somehow she did not think that an old and ratty feather would do for the spell. Buckbeak somehow seemed to know what she wanted for he lowered his head and that hooked beak picked a feather from the floor near his hooves and with a toss of his head he flipped the feather at her and promptly returned to his dinner.

"Thank you." Tonks bowed and then left the room, stopping at her old room to grab some of her things there. It would not do to go down stairs without evidence to back up her claim of why she was here this night.

"Get everything that you needed, Dear? That's good. Cup of tea?" Molly emerged from the kitchen as Tonks came down the stairs, looking hopeful and Tonks realised that Molly would be rather isolated here with everyone so busy.

"I'd love one." Tonks smiled and followed Molly into the kitchen.

She could pass a few minutes talking to Mrs Weasley and then she would leave by the floo and be back at Hogwarts for this ritual. Hermione would take hours to fetch a Unicorn hair and she had plenty of time. It was such a relief that she did not have to fight a very upset Hippogriff who objected to her pulling out a feather.













He watched the slow silent progress, remembering to shuffle his papers and resisted the urge to grin wickedly as the invisible man froze with a small gasp.

'This is far more entertaining than eating dinner.' he mused. 'I do hope Minerva keeps me some sweet rolls though.'

His invisible visitor moved closer to Fawkes and Dumbledore considered calling a halt to the matter there and then. The Phoenix was a rare and wondrous creature who had great magical abilities. Certain body parts were requirements in powerful potions and spells and he wished no harm to come to his Familiar. He and Fawkes had been together for many years and he would not permit harm to come to his friend even though he knew quite well that Fawkes was perfectly capable of defending himself.

With a sigh he straightened in his chair, stretching and giving himself the chance to glance up toward the upper level of the office. As he suspected the shade of Rowena, whom he had always suspected roamed Hogwarts but until this day could not say that he had actually seen, was still in the room and absorbed in watching the invisible intruder.

'Now just what are they up to?'

He was about to make a comment when the intruder bowed respectfully to the watching Phoenix and leaned forward but remained a good two steps back from the perch.

[illegible]

Harry

'I don't believe how nerve racking it is to have to cross this room with Him sitting there. I'm almost sure he doesn't know that I'm here but... I don't know. He's not an easy man to read. I wish Rowena would stop grinning.'

He managed a small and polite nod to the watching ghost and froze at the rustle of paper. A panicked glance at the headmaster revealed

him to be sitting in his chair still, a bundle of papers now in hand and seemingly taking no notice of him at all.

'I should have gone back to her room and waited until the map showed he had gone down to the Great Hall. Ah, damn. I've come too far now to run and hide like a little kid. The girls will be back soon and I have the spell to cast. I need that feather.'

He stopped two steps away from the Phoenix who was watching him with bright eyes, feathers ruffled though he did not seem to be alarmed. He knew without a doubt that somehow Fawkes not only knew that he was there but could see him perfectly well. Taking a deep breath he bowed from the waist and looked up to meet the bird's brilliant gaze. There surely had never been so beautiful a creature as a Phoenix, he mused.

"Good evening, Fawkes. I don't mean to disturb you or the professor but I find myself sorely in need of a feather from a Phoenix's tail. Could I trouble you to ask that you provide me with one?"

The bird clicked his beak, eyes bright on the shrouded figure standing before him. Harry again bowed, remembering the lessons he had been taught about such creatures by his long dead mentor. The Dragon Lords had known a great deal of information about magical creatures and his teacher had stressed repeatedly the need to be polite to creatures that held the level of magic a Phoenix claimed. A creature so totally infused by magic must never be underestimated or insulted and should never have any material component from their body stolen. Such would curse the spell for which the desired item was required to fail.

"I assure you that I need the tail feather for a good cause, Fawkes. It is to help fight against Voldemort and it is very, very important."

A quick and slightly panicked glance at the desk revealed that Dumbledore was searching through a draw for something and he looked quickly to the bird once again. After a long moment in which he could feel the weight of the creature's gaze on him, assessing him, Harry breathed a sigh of relief as the Phoenix plucked a flowing feather from its tail and stretched out toward him.

“Thank you.” He breathed, bowing a third time. “It is for a good cause, Fawkes.”

He started for the door, immensely relieved that he had managed to acquire the feather and could now escape without the professor being any the wiser and was only three steps from the door when the rustle of brocade robes froze him in lace.

“Going somewhere with that, young man?”

Spinning around he found himself to be under the scrutiny of serious blue eyes. The professor was standing behind his desk and Rowena was hovering on the upper level of the office and she certainly was not grinning now.

Harry uttered a brief and blistering curse that would have startled Filch into retreating pale faced had he heard it. Caught in the headmaster's office with an item that was seriously magical in nature and wearing his fathers invisibility cloak. If Dumbledore recognised the invisibility cloak he could very well put two and two together and come up with Harry Potter. Dare he just bolt out of the office or perhaps a more subtle approach was called for?

He could not expect Rowena to take a hand in this. She had not been keen on the idea of him coming to visit Fawkes in the first place and every mistake he had made this evening had been his own. He was going to have to get out of this himself and not involve anyone else. Especially not Rowena Ravenclaw, Silvanestri or Hermione and certainly there must be no mention of Tonks. Perhaps his disguise would stand up to the Headmaster's scrutiny and he might still wriggle out of disaster.

“My apologies for disturbing you, Professor Dumbledore. Just needed to speak with Fawkes over a matter of magic. I’ll be going now.” Since it was obvious that he was watched he slipped off the invisibility cloak.

[illegible]

## Dumbledore

Dumbledore leaned forward and rested his hands on his desk, one hand resting on the wand that lay there. He would need to take care as he had no true idea of the abilities and potential of his visitor. He had a school full of students to protect not to mention a vicious and evil adversary to fight and he had no indication if this was friend or foe. Despite Fawkes giving the individual a feather he needed to make certain that this was not one who did not oppose Voldemort. There were many who wished to stay out of the conflict to come, taking neither side but some of those supposedly neutral bodies had their own agendas. He would not face more than one opponent at a time and if this man was a threat he needed to know it.

“And a good evening to you too. What is it you that you require this feather for, Sir?” His hand closed around the wand and he walked around his desk, not openly threatening but warning that he would take action should the need arise. ‘I dare not let my guard down with this one. I know nothing of his ability’s and strengths or weaknesses.’ He came to a stop with the desk at his back and half the room’s distance between himself and the intruder.

[illegible]

Harry

Harry smiled hoping that Dumbledore could not see it through the shadow of the magic that disguised him. "I have a need that requires I use this Phoenix feather nothing more. I had hoped to speak with Fawkes without troubling you but now." He bowed to Fawkes to acknowledge the birds cooperation. "I ask that you place trust in my intentions and permit me to go on my way, Albus."

‘What am I going to do? He doesn’t know me in this guise and I can’t hurt him or kill him because he is need for this war even if I am the one prophesied to finish it... If I can take him down without levelling the school. I don’t really know how powerful he is but everyone says he’s the most powerful wizard in the wizarding world. Equal to Voldemort or better, I wonder? Damn prophecy say’s I’m the one to do the job though. How do I get out of this without fighting him? If I have to take him down how do I do it without going to full strength?’



Dumbledore and all I can hope to do is ensure that Hogwarts remains standing and that you do not get out of control.'

The ghost nodded, aware that Dumbledore was watching her and from the expression in his eyes he was not eager for this duel to take place. He was only too aware of the artefacts of power in the office at this time and the potential for disaster. In too many ways Harry was a Dragon Lord but she had to hope that the influence of the headmaster and the teachers from Hogwarts as they had trained his burgeoning young talent would exert influence over the wild streak of the old Lords. If they were fortunate such teachings would temper the Dragon Lords tendency for heavy handedness that Harry had been displaying of late.

They needed Harry strong but not out of control to face Voldemort.

‘I can at least impose limits as referee and I know that Dumbledore at least will take the hint I give him if only to ensure that Hogwarts remains standing. Sorry, Albus, but take a fall on this one for the good of us all.’

“Of course. I agree to referee the duel.” ‘I need to curtail Harry’s use of magic. Forgive me, Albus but at least he will not be wildly throwing around rune magic.’ She lifted a ghostly hand in a gesture to take position. “ All weapons are permitted and legal spell castings, no fire charms or high level curses.”

Only too aware of the Professors startled look at the limits she had set on the duel involving physical weaponry Rowena took up a position in the air above the two men.

"First to fall losses. Begin."

[illegible]

## Dumbledore

'Weapons? Weapons in a duel of magic? That has never been permitted.'

Dumbledore noted the slight lifting of the wand, eyes narrowed as he recognised the power of Fawke's feather contained within the wand and understood what it was the shade of the founder intended. Disgusted at her intention that he take a fall he fired a disarming charm first and was unsurprised that his target managed to roll out of the way of the feint. The true second level disarming spell hit his target as the off balance duellist landed on the carpet and the wand flew out of his hand and to Dumbledore's waiting grasp.

"Ah." Dumbledore murmured. "I win."

With a flick of his wrist he sent the wand sailing toward Fawkes who lifted from the floor with the tail feather in his beak and grasped the wand mid air in his talons. The phoenix flew to his perch where he set the wand down before settling himself the feather still grasped in his beak. The phoenix felt rather smug that his master had won so quickly and decisively.

[illegible]

Harry

A snarl escaped him and his hands were moving before he even realised what he was doing.

"I don't need a wand to beat you Old Man."

[illegible]Rowena

'No! Harry, get a grip on yourself. You can't break the conventions of the duel.' She was afraid that it was already too late.

"The duel is over. Victory is awarded to Albus Dumbledore."

Even as she spoke she knew that this time the Dragon Lord in Harry was rising too quickly for the old Harry to win control. Dragon Lords had never taken kindly to defeat.





Dumbledore narrowed his eyes as the disarming spell was deflected into a wall. The sleeping headmasters in their paintings began to stir, some who had been awake and watching beginning to take exception to the goings on in their office. He must not allow them to distract him and he wanted to bring Harry back to himself but not give away that he knew who this tall young man was.

'I know you but I do not see that I have to reveal that. We need you strong, not uncontrollable and a danger to everyone. In truth you can be more of a danger than Voldemort has ever been. Perhaps I do need to take that fall. Perhaps I can talk you around? Bury the Dragon Lord and bring out Potter?'

“Interesting trick you have there. Care to explain how it works? I’d love to know how you managed it.”

[illegible]

Harry

Harry pulled back his arm, raising the sword in his hand above his head so that both blades were sticking out on either side of his head. He gathered himself feeling the thrill of battle surge through him even as something deep within him recognised the man he was about to decapitate.

'What...? Dumbledore? Professor? I... no... I can't do this. I must not do this.'

[illegible]

## Rowena

There was a positively demonic look to Harry as he prepared his advance, sword raised above him and that fire in his eyes was pure Dragon Lord. Suddenly fearful that she was going to need to help Albus take out a bigger threat to peace than Voldemort Rowena prepared herself to take action if the professor looked to need it.







‘Albus is not one to miss a meal. I wonder what is keeping him?’

Her fellow professors, minus Hagrid were enjoying the meal, watching the banter of the students who shared the dinner with them. She was pleased that so few needed to remain at Hogwarts for the seasonal break. She was a firm believer that family needed to be together at Christmas but there was always some who had no place to go. For them Hogwarts tried to rise to the occasion and give them a memorable and enjoyable Christmas.

/ Come now! Someone is trying to take one of Fawkes feathers. /

The touch to her mind was unmistakably Dumbledore's and she was on her feet without thinking. The three other house head were likewise up and moving and she spared only a second to motion to some of the teachers to remain and watch the children. She did not need to alarm them but then she was running from the hall.

Who would dare to try to steal one of the Phoenix's feathers? Such highly magical creatures were well capable of defending themselves and Albus was afraid of no one. Could it be that he was actually afraid for whoever it was intent on stealing the feathers, one of the most magical items of a Phoenix? It was purely Dumbledore to worry about the perpetrator, of course. What more could she expect from the leader of the Light.

[illegible]

## Dumbledore

'Peeves you bungling idiot, why did you have to barge in now of all times?'

“No! Nooooo. Not me! It was not me!”

He could hear Peeves as he wailed, fleeing the office and the result of his foolery. Perhaps after this the poltergeist might curtail his annoying activities. For a week at least.

Dumbledore lay on the floor listening to the outraged tirade coming from every picture on the walls of the office. His predecessors were horrified at the goings on and he wished they would shut up so that he could concentrate. If this had not pulled Potter back from the brink of losing himself to the ancient magic then nothing would and he would not know until he could see the boy's eyes.

His hand was clamped over the bloody stump of his wand arm. The sword at least had been razor sharp and had severed the limb cleanly at the elbow. He had no doubt that Madame Pomfrey would be able to repair the damage but he hated the necessity of remaining in the hospital and there was little doubt that that was exactly where he was going to find himself very soon now.

There was a clunk and thud and he saw the blade lying on the floor near him and resisted the sigh. That held promise that Potter was suitably horrified with how things had turned out and was now more him self.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry." The whisper was in Harry's voice, undisguised and barely audible.

[illegible]

## Rowena

Horried she stared at the tableau. Around her the office rang with the outrage of the past headmasters. Before her Dumbledore lay still and Harry was staring at his hands clearly in a state of shock, the double blade resting at his feet where he had dropped it. If Dumbledore had intended to shock him out of the possession he had certainly succeeded but now she was afraid that Harry was lost in the shock and was going to be incapable of functioning. While they did not need Harry to be a true Dragon Lord they certainly did not wish him to be a vegetable either.

First thing was first though and she drifted over to the fallen headmaster who stirred as he felt her cold touch. “Get the boy to wake out of the shock.” He whispered, revealing to her that he was well aware of his surroundings.



“‘Why do I want Fawkes’ feather?’” He shook his head slightly. How had it all gotten so out of hand? “I needed... need the feather for a ritual. It was my intention to invite you but...”

He could not go on, instead concentrating on easing the blood flow of the severed limb and Dumbledore did not speak again, seeming to be content to lie there and permit the man who had been trying to kill him to now save his life.

‘I don’t understand what happened. Why I suddenly tried to kill him.’

At Rowena’s glare Harry shrugged slightly. Had he intended to invite Dumbledore to the ritual? For the life of him he did not know what he had been thinking.

“I think the Hospital wing is the only place you will be going now.”

He glanced around and noted the Phoenix watching him with bright eyes. Accusing eyes and Harry wondered if Fawkes would still give him the feather. He needed the cooperation of the phoenix or the spell would fail but lying was definitely not a good idea in front of such a creature. He could only do the best that he could and hope that Fawkes would believe him or forgive him.

‘I am so expelled when he finds out it was me who did this. I’m sorry. I never intended it to come to this.’

Harry pressed his fingers against a pressure point just above the elbow and felt a small surge of magic move through him. He was horrified at what he had caused and that supreme confidence he had in the prowess and abilities of the Dragon Lords quailed under his fear and rising anger. He was better than such barbarity and it had taken such a brutal act to make him see what he could all too easily become. There was more than a grain of truth in the legends of the Dragon Lords.

Look what he had already done? He had mind wiped some of the best people he knew. People who were trying to save both the wizarding world and the Muggles and he had treated them abominably. Look at what he had done to Ron, though he still felt that Ron had deserved it, but to so brutally and thoroughly beat him when



he was so out of the boys league? He had had no right to do that and Charlie... How could he ever look Charlie in the eye again? Twice he had mind wiped him.

He had a lot of thinking to do if he was not to become the A typical Dragon Lord.

"The ritual needs to be done." Rowena hovered near him. "Get a move on."

"Hold here." He gently moved two of the old man's fingers to the pressure point. "It will help control the bleeding."

"We have to go." Rowena warned, knowing that time was running short and she dare not chance the resurgence of the Dragon Lord.

He did not want to move. He did not want to do the thrice damned ritual any more but something good had to come out of this horror. If he could perform the ritual and perform it well then some good might still come out of this mess.

He tried to still the trembling, the training of his Dragon Lord mentor suggested that that was shock and he needed to get control of himself. He found the headmasters cloak lying over a chair and draped it over Dumbledore to keep him warm and hopefully out of shock which would only complicate Madame Pomfrey's treatment and finally walked over to stand before Fawkes perch.

'I have not been getting along with the man but I don't want him dieing on me. I never meant for any of this to happen' He thought to himself. 'I really need to hunt down and kill that Poltergeist... again.'

He inhaled sharply at the thought. A very Dragon Lord thought, he realised and that frightened him. He was aware of the bird's eyes firmly on him and he felt the weight of that look and knew that he could not hide anything from the Phoenix. This creature was more than capable of knowing him, as both Dragon Lord and as Harry.

'I need to learn how to merge the two selves together.' He noted the birds head dip and knew that Fawkes had followed the thought and was judging him.

The door to the office thumped against the back wall as it was thrust wide open and Professors McGonagall and Snape appeared in the doorway. Behind them Harry knew that at least the other two house heads must be waiting and guessed that at some point he or Dumbledore had triggered some form of magical alarm.

“What on earth is...” McGonagall’s face paled when she saw Albus Dumbledore lying on the floor his right arm missing from the elbow down and an unknown man standing next to Fawkes. “Albus!”

The ghost stood between them, separating Harry from the irate professors and he saw Dumbledore lever himself up a little and whatever action they would have taken on their own was stilled by the Headmaster. They looked between the unknown man and the headmaster and Harry saw hands twitch but their wands remained down and not raised threateningly at him.

Harry looked at the four Professors and nodded to them “There has been a misunderstanding. I need to ask Fawkes for a feather, nothing more.” He looked to the phoenix and bowed respectfully. “I am sorry. I did not mean for any of this to happen. I know that I have a problem and it must be dealt with... and it will be. Please. I need to see to this ritual and for that I need the feather. It may save lives later.”

Fawkes seemed to weigh the whispered words and his eyes never blinked as he stared at the armoured figure towering over him. There was nothing threatening in Harry now and he sensed genuine contrition and true determination to see that he controlled the wild nature of the Dragon Lord and that natural arrogance. With a click on his beak the Phoenix dropped the feather before Harry and permitted him to reach forward and take it.

With a quiet sigh Harry nodded and bowed to the bird. “Thank you. May I have my wand too?” He slipped the feather into a pocket hidden within his cloak and waited.

The phoenix again clicked his beak and Harry reached to curl his fingers about the wand. He froze as Fawkes mantled and lightening fast the bird stabbed at his hand with his beak but that beak did not draw blood. Instead a controlled bite, a warning and Harry felt a surge of magic and understood that it was a warning. With that the bird took

wing and landed before Dumbledore, magical tears already weeping from those bright eyes.

Harry picked up his wand and with a deft flick of his wrist it was gone into the folds of his cloak. Fortifying himself with a deep breath he turned to face the assembled Professors. "I believe that Professor Dumbledore needs your assistance. I have no wish for another needless confrontation."

He looked to the ghost of the founder, half hoping that she would order the group out of his way but Rowena remained mute, watching but taking no further action. He knew that he had damaged his standing with the founder but he also knew that she was willing to help him overcome the urges of the Dragon Lord. This night had been a mistake but one he was to learn from and come from a better person.

'Please move. I don't want to hurt any of them. Enough hurt has been done already... though if Snape is going to be difficult I wouldn't mind throwing him around the room a little...' the thought caused him to wince. Already a hint of the Dragon Lord returning and that simply would not do. He was going to have to gain control of these urges. 'Perhaps I should simply allow Silvenestri to finish that staring contest they started.'

Professor McGonagall, Flitwick and Professor Sprout moved out of the way but Professor Snape remained standing in the doorway, staring at Harry.

"They may be afraid of you but I'm not." A quick flip of the wand and muttered incantation saw Harry's wand fly from his cloak and into Snape's hand.

Harry seemed to shudder and a hand lifter imperiously and the great two bladed sword on the floor was suddenly in the air and flying into his hand. He had not even consciously thought to summon the sword and he could feel the stir of the Dragon Lord within him, but he could see that old man on the floor and the Phoenix weeping to heal him and he fought to keep his sanity.

He tilted his light and was unaware that the light showed his lower face, clearly displaying a cold and calculating smile to those who watched. The portraits of the headmasters were silent now each of them looking worried but Snape remained facing off against Harry with wand in hand.

“Do you think you can take me Snape or is that famous Slytherin cunning going to save you?” He could hear that deep voice again and feel the pull of muscles as his sword once again was raised ready for another throw. “Don’t make me do it you greasy-git.”

‘No! I won’t let you. I won’t do it.’ He fought against the urge to throw the blade and he could see Snape wand rise to cast a spell and he could almost see the snide comment the Potions Master was going to throw at him.

“Enough.”

The quiet voice sliced through the air and both sword and wand were lowered without conscious thought at the authority it carried. Dumbledore slowly climbed to his feet, his wand grasped in his left hand his right arm missing from the elbow.

“That is quite enough, both of you. Snape, permit him to leave undisturbed.” His eyes were serious as he turned his attention to the armoured figure. “Go. Do what it is you must but see to it that no danger comes of it to Hogwarts.”

He moved between the Potions Master and Harry and his gaze never moved from the shadow shrouded face. With a gentle sweep of his remaining hand he motioned toward the door.

Harry took a steadying breath, forcing down that arrogance once more and with unfeigned respect for the old man offered him a bow and a small apologetic smile.

“I am sorry that things got out of control. I shall go and if it please you and you are still capable, know that you can witness the ritual if you wish.”

He glanced at the other Professors who were watching him as though they expected him to explode and wondered if he might not himself. He did not know himself this night and it frightened him but he was not alone and he would have help to control this thing that constantly rose within him and frightened him with such terrible behaviour.

He then looked around and found Rowena floating over everyone's heads, still keeping between him and the group by the door though she was watching Dumbledore and he could not mistake the respect he saw there for the Headmaster.

"Rowena can I trouble you to gather everyone and prepare? We need to make ready for the ritual and I ask that you tell the others to disguise their identities."

He saw the watching professors flick their eyes up to the ghost and the recognition that came over them as they realised who it was who floated in the headmasters office. He was thankful that she smiled at him as she faded away and guessed that she now trusted him enough not to lose control again. Or perhaps trusted Dumbledore enough to know that he would not permit matters to get out of hand.

Dumbledore sighed, drawing every eye back to him as he looked around the office. "I need to have a few words with Peeves. Well now you do realise that I must know who you are but first..."

Dumbledore bent down carefully and Harry winced as he picked up his severed arm and looked at it with detached interest. Making the hand wave at him once or twice he nodded his head as Fawkes rose to perch delicately on his shoulder. "I'll just get this reattached first, if you don't mind. Should not take too long. I presume that you will be performing the ritual within the Great Hall? Yes, I thought so. Snape, Flitwick, Madame Sprout, would you see that the students are safely in their house common rooms. Minerva, come with me to the hospital, if you would. We need to talk."

Harry nodded once in respect to the Headmaster as he left the office, mindful of how Snape glared at him but the Potions Master made no move to delay or stop him



The little girl who was dressed in a silver cloak and who wore a black dress with jet-black hair and whose green eyes seemed to look into your soul was undoubtedly Silvenestri and now he had a good idea of just who Silvenestri was. The disguises were magical in nature and quite well executed, but what did he expect? Dragon Lords were nothing if not proficient in spell casting.

Next was a young woman seemingly no older than any of students from the sixth year, her hair a rich violet colour and her eyes a deep blue. She too wore a silver cloak and beneath its folds her robes were black. The third gave the appearance of being older than the eldest of the girls by a mere few years and had light brown hair and clear coloured eyes. She was sitting on the arm of the chair Dumbledore normally occupied in which Harry now sat and one hand constantly ran through his hair. Her black robes peeked from beneath the silver cloak and little of her figure could be seen beneath its enveloping folds.

The nightly feast had been cleared away and the tables drawn to the sides of the hall, making room for this ritual that Dumbledore was admittedly curious to see. Harry had gone to a great deal of trouble to gather that phoenix feather so the Headmaster was willing to give him the benefit of the doubt and permit it to be undertaken within the hall. Here there were a great many safeguards that would permit him to take action should anything disastrous occur.

The hall was empty of everyone but the Head Boy and Head Girl at this time who were both Ravenclaw's and he wondered if that was Rowena's choice to have them present or if Harry had asked for them and if so, why? The four Professors who were the Heads of the respective House's of Hogwarts, Minerva, Snape, Flitwick and Sprout were standing in front and to the side of the head table.

Dumbledore returned he's sight to the man seated in his place, judging whether he was in the presence of the Dragon Lord or Harry, or perhaps that third persona that they needed to strengthen, the one who was a combination of the best of both persona's. Harry was drinking something from a cup while rubbing a hand gently up and down the brown haired woman's back in a caress that caused the Professor to wonder if there might not be help in controlling the

Dragon Lord persona from that quarter. It was amazing, the power of love, as borne out by Lily Potter's love for her son. Perhaps there was help here to control that more violent personality and to allow the Harry he knew to come to the fore and control the legendary temperament of his other self.

Resting in front of Harry on the table lay the great two headed sword and the wand that Dumbledore had recognised as Harry's. The feel of the phoenix feather at the core of that wand was unmistakable to him. The tail feather taken from Fawkes rested near the wand along with a second feather, some scales that he thought might be from Merfolk and a long strand of pale gold hair of a colour and texture he associated with the mane of a yearling unicorn.

‘Interesting choice of components.’ He mused silently.

Harry looked up and Dumbledore wondered if he really saw that momentary flash of relief in his emerald green eyes. The eyes were a far more vivid and deep colour than Harry's natural eye colour and he wondered why he had not chosen a different colour to disguise himself. It was of no consequence though and he watched as Harry drew the others after him as he came closer.

[illegible]

Harry

“Ah, Albus... Professor.” He recalled that he was being presumptive and insulting to name the Headmaster so familiarly.

“Albus.” Dumbledore murmured which drew a rustle of consternation and surprise from the other professors.

"Albus." Harry offered a small bow of gratitude at the concession. He wondered again if the Headmaster had recognised him but felt certain that if that were the case he would not now be standing in the Great Hall. No, he had not been recognised but he had to be more careful.

“Please have a seat. I offered seats to the others but they declined my offer. I fear that they do not trust me.”



He noted the Headmasters newly healed arm in its sling as he escorted Dumbledore to the High chair and saw him settled there. With Dumbledore settled into his seat Harry adjusted his hood slightly in what he recognised as a nervous gesture and sighed. He had to get on with this and trust that he could control both himself and the magic or he would forever live in fear of the power within him. It had seemed easier to control the Dragon Lord's arrogance since Tonks had joined him and he wondered if perhaps she might not be his greatest salvation.

Tonks was standing at his side, as he preferred her to be and he turned to her finding himself presenting her in a rather formal and courtly fashion to the old man. "I like you to meet my Lover, Silver. The little girl is called Gold and last but by no means least is my friend Violet."

Dumbledore watched as Silver enveloped Harry in a quick hug while the other two smiled and shook their heads as though amused by the two.

"And your name, Sir, before we go continue?" Dumbledore inquired after Harry gave Silver a quick kiss on the cheek.

Harry straightened to his full height, the illusion gifting him with a couple of inches extra elevation and smiled. Pulling back his hood to reveal long black hair tied back in a neat pony tail and dark emerald eyes looking he bowed formally to the Professors gathered. He knew that if they saw through the illusion they would see him as a somewhat older version of Harry but he had tried to model himself after Sirius Black

"You can call me Nameless. At this time that is the most appropriate name. For this ritual I need some help. It calls for three people of at least 15 years of age and six years of magical study to be safely performed. As you can see Gold is much less than the required age and Rowena, being deceased is unable to full fill the task. I ask that one of you assist in filling the vacant place?"

He removed his sword and the wand from the table, placing them within the folds of his cloak as he waited for the professors to decide which of them would take the vacant place. If none of them would

then he was in serious trouble, unless either the Head Boy or Head Girl would agree to perform the ritual. He was hoping that Dumbledore was curious enough to order one of them to comply.

Dumbledore considered the professors in silence for a moment and then stood slowly. He was tired, he had lost a lot of blood and he would by far prefer to be tucked into bed and working on that resting that Madam Pomfrey had insisted on. However, he needed to know what was happening in his school and weakened as he was he still had more than sufficient power to act should the need arise.

"I will not ask that any of you take part in this unknown ritual. I will take the vacant place. You will all stay back and be ready for anything should there be a problem."

Minerva nodded once, sharply and glared at Nameless in clear warning that if anything happened to the Headmaster he was going to regret it. Snape looked upset and about to protest but a shake of Dumbledore's white maned head silenced him and the remainder of the professors nodded in agreement.

Nameless seemed to hesitate and then nod in agreement gathered up the four items on the table and finding Rowena at the far end of the table moved to join her. Silver and Violet stood behind him and Gold moved out of the immediate group, standing to one side.

Harry looked at Dumbledore but now he dared not protest. The professor had so much experience and would undoubtedly be capable of protecting himself if something went wrong. If anyone survived a disaster during the ritual it would be the canny old man who had forbidden his staff to participate.

"Rowena are the circles readied?" He called over to Rowena.

"The circles are ready to be moved. Where do you want them?"

"Right here." He indicated the centre area of the Great Hall and motioned Gold to remain back as the ghost drifted toward the area.

Rowena floated in the centre of the hall and began to chant. An eerie sound echoing oddly in her ghostly voice. None of the watching

professors could understand her spell though Dumbledore looked to be listening hard. Harry hoped he would not recognise the language though he supposed it did not really matter. At some time he was going to learn that Harry was the Dragon Lord but at least not tonight. The chant seemed to gather power and strength. At the peak of her chant the cleared area in the middle of the hall became eerily light and five glowing circles appeared rotating in mid air. The circles slowly settled to the floor as the chant slowed and Rowena fell silent.

Harry surveyed the four circles, checking the accuracy of their placement and noted the professors murmuring about the ancient rune denoting the elements, one in each of the four outer circles. The inner fifth circle contained the four elemental runes and a fifth rune to act as the focus in the centre. All of the runes were glowing with a pale purple light.

Dumbledore looked up from the rune circles to watch as the man who called himself Nameless passed the Hippogriff feather to Violet and then the Unicorn hair to Silver before he moved to face Dumbledore and held out the Merfolk scales to him.

"You are to chant the spell written into the elemental circle for water. I ask that you trust me and leave the rest to me, Albus."

Nameless placed the scales in his hands and Dumbledore was pleased that the boy's voice did not betray any fear that anything might go wrong in the casting of this ritual. Harry, or rather Nameless appeared to trust that he would not deliberately mess up the ritual.

Harry watched as Dumbledore nodded agreement to him and walked over to the water circle. He held his breath as the Headmaster surveyed the runes within the circle and with a softly uttered word he placed himself at the edge of the circle. The ring of light flashed for an instant and at a motion of the professors newly repaired arm, now out of its sling the light gentled and resumed its rhythmic rippling. The circles attended by Silver and Violet took longer to calm as they took their places and he had to admire the old wizard's skill. It reminded him that for all his power he still did not know enough to go against the old man without a great deal of luck.

Harry placed himself at the circle on a diagonal opposite to that occupied by Dumbledore and calmed the light quickly as it reacted to his presence. Ensuring that everyone was in their place he drew a deep breath and leaning forward he placed the phoenix feather within the circle and began the chant. The level of the light flared and acquired a red glow that danced like fire.

He watched, repeating the chant as Tonks placed the unicorn hair within the circle she stood at and began to chant. After the first run through a flush of green rippled through the light. She repeated the chant as Dumbledore began his chant, placing the Merfolk scales within his circle.

Harry was on the third repeat of his chant as Tonks began her second and Dumbledore spoke the first round of the chant and the professors deep voice caused his circle to flush aqua blue. By this time his own circle was flickering and dancing flame and he knew that Dumbledore was not going to disrupt the ritual. As he began the fourth round of the chant Hermione placed the Hippogriff feather within her circle and began the first cadence of her chant.

He fell silent as he completed the fourth round of the chant, his circle now leaping flame. Tonks completed her fourth round and was bathed in forest green light, strong and steady. At the completion of his fourth round of the chant Dumbledore appeared to stand at the edge of a rippling pond full of blue water and Hermione completed her fourth round to stand on the edge of a soft white light that seemed to echo a roaring wind.

Harry turned his attention to the fifth circle. The light from the four elemental circles seemed to flow into the centre circle and mingle, running into each other, dancing around each other. As one all four of the casters spoke the final cadence of the rune chant, their voices echoing and merging into one and the centre circle was filled with the illumination. The sharp tang and electricity of high level magic was in the air, rising on a higher and higher beat as they brought their chants to a crescendo.

He held in mind the words of the fading chant as he whispered in the maelstrom of forces his summons. It had to work and at this moment

he knew that it would indeed work. With confidence he sent his summons out into the gathered magic.

'I summon you who are the Leader of the Forgotten.'

He repeated the mantra over and over again as the combined voices of the elemental casters fell silent and the roar of the magic filled the Great Hall.

All at once the four elemental circles flared with light, forming columns of fire, emerald and aqua and white pure light to rise higher and higher until they struck the enchanted ceiling of the hall. For a moment the soaring arches of the Gothic architecture was plainly visible as the enchantment's clashed and then the columns shrank, diminishing swiftly to play within the circles once more before flickering out.

With the dying of the light Harry looked immediately to the central circle where the lights swirled and danced, four colours combining in a multitude of combinations, uniting and dividing and forming into a shape. Slowly, forming and dissipating as the light swirled and eddied and then reforming again and again something formed within the circle.

Harry held his breath as the shape become more solid with each cyclic swirl of light until he found himself staring in rapt fascination at a tall young man with draconic wings arching from his back. Long hair swirled around him in the currents and eddies of light revealing to the rapt watchers the unmistakable pointed ears of an elf.

Nameless found himself smiling and suddenly fighting against the resurgence within him of the Dragon Lord. He would not lose control now though and he fought down the surge, remaining in control of himself as he whispered his success.

“The Forgotten have returned.”

[illegible]

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## Chapter 17: Deals and History

/ Telepathic /

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The Forgotten stood before them, alert and attentive to the smallest movement made in his presence. He was the centre of attention, holding their focus as surely as if he had held an automatic pistol trained on them. He was beautiful, and terrifying at the same time, so normal and so exotic, so mysterious.

The feel of magic filled the Great Hall sending the smallest of hairs on their bodies to tingling attention, reminding everyone that this was ancient magic, powerful, little understood and dangerous.

He was dressed in a flowing robe of fine black silk of a cut and style that permitted his wings to move freely without restriction. His hair, moving gently in the current of the magic flowing within the hall was a soft blonde and cut to his shoulders and tied back with the use of a black silk ribbon into a cue. The membrane of his wings, trembling gently in the power flows were of a light golden colour. The eyes that looked about the hall and marked each person were the colour of mercury and showed in their depths that this man, though he looked young, was in fact far older than the twenty six or so years he appeared.

The metallic eyes focused on Harry and the blonde head nodded in regal greeting though his tone implied a question. "Lord Silver?"

Harry, Nameless to those watching, nodded and smiled. "Yes and what is your name young leader?" He projected a deeper sounding voice than his natural tone, an echo of a time when he had been older and wielded great power as a Dragon Lord. 'God damn it. I forgot that to them I had another name and Lord Silver is how it translates to those listening in English. I can't afford to make these kinds of mistakes. I need to deal with these people carefully and forgetting something as simple as that is not a good way to start.'

Watching carefully Albus looked up and gave a small smile at the look not quite hidden on Harry's face at the utterance of the name

Lord Silver. Only the long years of reading faces, students and parents, teachers, politicians and Ministry of Magic personnel enabled him to see that momentary discomfort.

‘Ah, forget something, did you? Some thing that has the potential to reflect on this meeting in a bad light if you are not more careful, I think. Most interesting. It looks like Harry has a few more titles than even I do at the moment.’ He paused and then gave a little chuckle to himself. ‘Something we can sit down and have a nice talk about.’

The winged man’s lips curved into a smile and he walked forward to the edge of the focus circle surrounding him. Those mercury eyes swept again over those who watched before settling once more on Harry.

“My name is Shar, Lord Silver. How may my people serve you?” Blonde hair shimmered in the lighting as he dipped forward into a slight bow to Harry.

“Shar. It is a good name for a leader of the Forgotten. Time has passed and as a reflection of that perhaps you should stop calling me Lord Silver. My name, for now at least, is Nameless. How are your people faring on that world to which you moved over 2000 years ago? Have you lived in peace and safety?”

Harry spoke to Shar while making a restraining motion at everyone else in the room, particularly at Professors McGonagall and Snape as they both tried for closer looks at the shimmering runes, edging closer to the circles. He could not afford for there to be any disturbance of the circles and he needed to keep the area clear and controlled. It was natural that they were curious about Shar, he himself was, but that would have to wait for another time.

“We live. We survive and that is all that we can do for we can not prosper without the holy city’s power. The city remains on your world, Nameless and without it...”

Shar lifted one wing in a slight shrug and his eyes flickered once again around the room this time taking particular care to examine the faces of those who watched. As he concluded each examination he



nodded to them, having memorized them and they felt that somehow he had assessed them.

The Head Boy looked at the Professors. "Holy City? What is it and where is it?" He whispered, looking from the teaching staff to the Headmaster within the elemental circle, hoping that at least one of the elders present would answer.

Albus raised an eyebrow at the comment glancing at the Head Boy but shrugged his shoulders in an elegant and clear 'I don't know' gesture. After a moment's consideration of the forces surrounding them all he whispered a summoning charm and a chair appeared in the centre of his circle. His old bones were feeling every year this night and his arm was starting to hurt.

Harry sucked in a startled breath as the chair appeared within the elemental circle but there was not so much as a flicker in the power flows of the greater spell and he had to admire the old Headmasters skill. Dumbledore still knew more than he of the nuances of magic and he had to respect that knowledge. Only with age could you gain such flawless ease with the Art.

Shar too was watching and those metallic eyes centered on the old man within the circle. Though the young looking face remained emotionless Harry noted that Shar was giving the Headmaster of Hogwarts something more than a degree of respect from his initial assessment. It was no small display of knowledge and ability to work a summoning charm within the power flows dedicated to the ancient magic.

He watched as Dumbledore settled himself within the embrace of the chair, his heavy robes whispering as he settled and Harry spared a glance at the Head Boy then focused once again on Shar though he did, after a moment, decide to give some background to the listeners.

"The Holy City is in fact one of the out lying cities of the old Elven Empire that was wiped out more than two millennium ago. What became known as the Holy City was originally named Ice Cliff, a most appropriate name in truth as it was built within the arctic ice cap. Originally it was to be used as an outpost against the attacks of the

evil dragons of that region, mostly the blues and lesser whites. Later it became something else entirely.”

Professor Sprout stepped forward but eased back again when Harry waved a hand in a cautionary reminder that no one was to get too close to the circles. “The Elven Empire fell more than two millennia ago? How do you know about it, Nameless?”

“I know.” It came out as a whisper yet it seemed to carry on the very currents of magic that circulated throughout the room. “It has been almost three thousand years since the Elven collapse when the Dragon Host was raised up to become a power in its own right. In our turn, as is the way of things, we fell. More than 2000 years ago with the rise of the Ministry of Magic and its gain of power within the magical world the Dragon Host fell. We did not last so long as the Elves. No great accomplishment, I think.”

Harry saw Tonks and Hermione look over at him from where they stood within the elemental circles and he was uncertain just what it was that he saw in their eyes. Rowena and Silvenestri were standing on the far side of the circles watching and listening with an apparent lack of interest in what they were discussing. Waiting, he guessed for the more important matters to be raised.

After a moment Dumbledore leaned forward and there was a gleam in his eyes that was notable despite the faint shimmer that occasionally rippled through the elemental circle that surrounded him. “Dragon Host? So you are a member of this Dragon Host?”

His eyes flickered up to meet Harry’s and Harry felt the light brush of his mind and knew that there was no force behind the probe. It almost seemed a caress even as it was an enquiry. Looking into Harry’s eyes Dumbledore saw there something... an old hurt, a loss for a life that was forever gone but nothing of his emotions and no memories penetrated his shield.

‘I have got to stop trying to do that. He has learned well and now his mind is very well protected... Protected enough to survive Voldemort, I think but I must be certain he does not drop his guard. Besides, if I am fortunate one day I may just catch him out and I might be lucky to learn something of the Rune Magic. Did it originate with the Dragon

Lords or perhaps from somewhere else? I love learning about new magic and techniques and Rune magic, the little that we know, has always fascinated me. I have only Harry who may know the answers.'

Harry snorted softly his gaze wandering over the Great Hall and coming to rest for a moment on Tonks. "I am the last of the Dragon Host unless I father another rider or find another suitable and a dragon for him to ride."

Tonks felt his eyes on her and shook her head, turning away at the thought of having a child with Harry as yet. Perhaps in some years she might consider it but now she had too much to learn, too much to do and she was in no way interested in his dynastic ideals.

Albus, watching the by play carefully gave an amused snort at the look Silver flashed to Nameless and couldn't help but chuckle. When he thought of that particular young woman having a baby he shuddered. He knew who she was and while some dismissed her he knew better. She was stronger willed than most gave her credit for and he knew that if Harry, or Nameless wished children then Tonks, or Silver as she was this night, would be holding him at bay for some years yet to come. It could lead to some most interesting fireworks in the domestic situation. He would watch with interest as matters developed.

Rowena stirred, moving to walk around the power circles until she stood behind Harry and knew that she had all of their attention, Dumbledore included. "It was my fascination with Nameless that made me want to build the school here and not somewhere else. I have had a crush on him for over 1000 years now but I suppose that I shall have to settle for the knowledge that Silver will take care of him. Apparitions are not the warmest of companions on cold nights."

Shar stirred, extending delicate fingers to sample the power flows and after a moment, satisfied with what he sensed he spoke. "If you will it I shall tell you of how my people came to be in this world and how we came to reside upon another?"

Dumbledore, delighted at the prospect of a history lesson sampled the flows of magic himself and determined they were strong and stable. He nodded acceptance of the offer and ignoring the rather

disgruntled Nameless who had suddenly had his prime position usurped by Shar and Dumbledore conjured some chairs for everyone to make them selves comfortable. Shar, with a flick of his wings and curve of delicate fingers produced a cushion for him to sit upon and with his wings arched for a moment he settled, cross legged then drew his wings close to his back.

“Once, long ago, my people were Elves. Our city was a small one and insignificant amid the Empire. At any given time there would have been no more than 2000 people within its walls. We were of no importance to those of greater rank who had their games of control and advancement though had they known of our secret I do not doubt that they would have noticed us. Beneath the city that my ancestors called home lay the nest of the last of the gold dragons. For the births of three Elven generations we had lived with them in peace and the two races left each other alone. We had enjoyed something more than 200 years without attack or disease disrupting our lives when disaster struck. In this age we know not why or how it came about that one of our Spellweavers went mad and in his insanity tried to gain control of the Heart Stone of the city.”

“Heart stone?” Dumbledore prompted, shifted slightly forward in his chair and interrupting Shar.

Both the gleam in his eyes and the relaxed lines of his face showed how much he was enjoying this new font of information. ‘Ah, Merlin! This is so much better than watching the old Headmasters and Mistresses of Hogwarts fight over the things they did years ago. Living history is wonderful.’ He thought with a small smile.

“The Heart Stones are the key to Elven magic. Without these stones we can’t use spells of any kind within our own walls. You see elves draw their magic from the land around them but it was decided long in the past that magic should be controlled within the home. As cities developed this was adopted to include not just the domicile of the wielder, but his home environment as well. Magic must be monitored else unauthorized use might endanger the people. So it came to be that within the walls of our cities all magic would be drawn through the Heart Stone of which there was one to a city. Thus was the need

to use magic possible yet also monitored for the good of all residence.”

Dumbledore considered this and nodded his understanding, well aware of the need to contain and control magic in an inherently magical society. There had to be checks and balances else anarchy reined.

Shar bowed his head to the old man and continued. “The Spellweaver managed to circumvent the guards placed upon the Heart Stone’s tower and within the chamber housing the stone he started to absorb the power contained within the stone. Other Spellweavers and some guards became aware of his intentions and fought against the drain his interference was causing. My ancestor, a many times removed grandmother survived with some skill remaining to her succeeded in reaching him and fought him for control of the stone. The family chronicles say that the fight lasted for many hours and as a result of the strains placed upon the stone by their battle for control the Heart Stone cracked and was destroyed in a conflagration that destroyed the tower and combatants. It goes without saying that you can not release that much magical energy without there being consequences. The Dragon nest beneath the city was also destroyed. There was another effect, one no one could have foreseen. Dragons are an inherently magical creature and even as their nest and they themselves were destroyed their magical energy, driven by the unleashed powers of the Heart Stone meshed and bonded with the Elven survivors. A mere 500 of the city dwellers survived the distortion of the tower and their city.”

Harry sighed softly and settled into his seat. Everyone was ignoring him, their attention focused on Shar and the golden gleaming wings of a dragon at his back. He knew that he was not going to regain their attention or be able to speak to the Forgotten until this story had been told. It seemed that Shar was a natural born storyteller and he held them captivated with his tale of a time long past.

“Those in command of the Empire did not choose to investigate the destruction of an entire city. We were a small city, remote and of no importance. My ancestors were left for dead and to fend for themselves. It is without doubt that travelers would have taken word

back to the Empire of the destruction of the city and no doubt there were rumors of what might have happened to destroy an entire city but no one came to investigate. Few there were who would brave the ice and snow of the wasteland my ancestors called home, fewer still had any reason to seek us out. They were left to survive as best they could or die. It was not a simple or easy thing to survive amid those conditions with so little to assist them but they were a hardy folk and they were never of a mind to wait on the officials of the Empire to offer aid to them for anything. They were simply too far away from those with the power to help to expect any aid to reach them and thus they did not wait for it. It was hard but it was not impossible and they lived to build at first shelters and then a village in which to eek out an existence. Why no one expected there to be lasting repercussions from the magical distortion that destroyed the city with the tower I do not understand, but from the records that exist today I know that they were greatly disturbed when the first births occurred. The unleashed magic of the Hearth Stone that killed so many of the people and destroyed to the last egg the nest of the Dragons had cursed – or blessed, depending on your point of view, the generations to follow. Those first born were not quite as I and others are this day but they had wings much like mine though there was initially evidence of scales upon their bodies in those early days. Marked by the Dragons demise the children were healthy and strong, clever and proven to be surprisingly wise for their years as they developed.”

All eyes save those of Nameless who had heard this story before were centered on the Forgotten and he seemed undisturbed by their stares. Nor was he fooled by the apparent disinterest of the one who had asked to be named with no name. Shar sat quietly and waited for the questions he knew must be asked.

Hermione was the first to break the silence, her voice soft and low but clearly heard within the Great Hall. “So you are descended of those children who somehow had become a part of the dragons. That is why you have wings but what about this city? The Holy City?”

Shar turned his shining metallic eyes to her and dipped his head in a small respectful bow, a soft smile lit his face. “The magical essence of the gold dragons was released with the explosion of magic from the Heart Stone and such is the nature of the Elven magic that it was

absorbed by those few who survived. If nothing else Dragons are great survivors and the drive to survive is a part of all that is a part of the Earth itself. The wings that mark us to this day are the legacy of the dragons we account to be our ancestors. Elves can be a stubborn lot and dragons even more so. The city that was so much rubble had been home to both races and neither side of the merged creatures was willing to abandon that which had been home. That first generation of Forgotten, the product of both dragon and elf, determined to rebuild the city and remain amid the ice and snow. It suited them to become forgotten for many of the Elves of that time were intolerant and would have thought nothing of wiping such abominations from the face of the earth. In time the reconstruction of the city produced a city that become somewhat more beautiful than it had been originally. The blend of elf and dragon lent itself to a different style of architecture and art that was unique. Though I have never seen the city I have viewed art works that depict many of its wonders. I would have liked to see it.”

A soft sigh escaped him and after a moment he shook his wings, seeming to wake from a doze.

“The city was rebuilt and for a time it thrived. Those Elves who had survived the destruction of Ice Cliff began to die far earlier than they should have given the life span of an Elf but it undoubtedly was a result of the destruction of the Hearth Stone. Soon their children marked with the dragon’s legacy out numbered them. It was near this time, when there were few of the original survivors left that travelers from the Elven Empire chanced upon the place we now called the Holy City for it filled our people with magic that was the legacy of the dragons. Those Elves who found them were shocked and while a very few were accepting none could forget that we were no longer elves. Most were shocked and cursed us as being some thing that was other and therefore it was undesirable that they continue to exist. Our ancestors were not natural and that is against the Elven order of things. They called us The Forgotten, the Forbidden and Abomination for we were neither elf nor dragon yet filled with the magic of both. It was learned very early on by the parents of the first Forgotten that their children were not limited to the Elven form of Magic. They were able to use the Elven magic with the ease of their parents but they also had the ability to cast magic as only a dragon could. No focus,

no Heart Stones were required for them to use magic and they could go beyond the villages and cities of the elves and use magic freely without any great preparation. It frightened them, I think, to see how easily my ancestors could use what had required great concentration and training before. Only human wizards had been able to cast magic in forlorn and lonely places away from the Heart Stones and the human wizards then beginning to come into existence required some focus such as the wands that I see you still wield to this day.”

Harry jumped into the pause then, taking the opportunity to break into the conversation. “It was not long after the Elven peoples learned of the Holy City and the Forgotten that my people raised up from the ranks of the first human wizards to take what power we could. Most of the time this was accomplished by force as the Elves considered the humans to be little more than apes. The Dragon Lords desire to take what was there and show the Elves that they were not animals started the war between the Elves and the Dragon Host that lasted for generations. In time the elves started to die out and the Dragon Host gained strength as they bred faster than the Elves whose life would number in the centuries whilst man’s life was an eye blink in comparison. The Host took control of the old lands that had been under Elven control, destroying the cities one by one and the Hearth Stones, weakening the elves further with each stone destroyed. With the earthquake that sent Atlantis, the Elven capitol to the bottom of the ocean the fate of the Elves was sealed. It was a blow that they would never recover from. In time the Dragon Host also found the Forgotten in their ice bound city and waiting for us to attack them. But to the surprise of the Forgotten and the few Elves with them, we didn’t attack.”

Shar stirred, absently flicking golden strands of hair over his shoulder. “The Dragon Host saw the merging of Elf and Dragon and instead of reviling us as unnatural they acknowledged us as being the ultimate merge. They could merge mind to mind, soul to soul with their dragons, but they could not merge physically and they revered a species who were naturally so close to dragon kind. With the Dragon Host’s acceptance of the Forgotten our people became close and alliances formed. We helped them where needed and they helped us to survive and indeed to thrive within the ice locked city. The Dragon Host were there to aid my ancestors when they needed to flee as the



ice caps grew and the ice shelf threatened to crush the city. It was at this time that the Ministry of Magic, that uniquely human organization began to hunt down the Dragon Lords and as is the way of the cycle of life, to take their turn in control of the mysteries of magic. So that is the story.”

Gold and Silver nodded slowly, thinking over what had been said while others exchanged long looks, some in wonder and others in awe of ‘living history’. The Head Boy and Head Girl were looking between Nameless and Shar as though they had gained two heads in the last few minutes and within his elemental circle Albus Dumbledore gave thought to a very large file locked away within the Department of Mystery deep within the Ministry of Magic.

‘The Cycle of Life, Shar? Yes, it is a cycle and maybe Harry is not so far off being right that the Ministry is becoming a little too controlling over the years. Yet if the Ministry falls, what is there, who is there, to stand between the people and raw magic unleashed? A balance must be maintained.’

Harry stirred, flicking a gaze about him and noting that everyone was still seated and most looked to be lost in their own thoughts. With a small sigh he turned to face the Forgotten. “Much time has passed and the icecaps are receding. The spells that preserve your city against the pressure of the ice are still active, I feel them faintly. With the retreat of the ice your city will be accessible soon enough but first we will need to bring your people safely to this planet. There is also the matter of the Muggles to be considered. It would not do for them to learn of the city or its inhabitants.”

Shar looked curious at the mention of Muggles, never having heard the term before but he offered a small bow to Nameless to acknowledge his promise that the city still existed.

“As once was stated in the agreement between our two races, we who were named the Forgotten stand ready to come to the aid of the Dragon Lords when called. You need to open the gate from your side to this world and we will be ready on this side to come through, Nameless. We will fulfill the oaths of the Accord that is our agreement and aid the Dragon Lords that survived the ravages of time to

summon us back to our rightful place.” Shar gracefully rose to his feet and this time offered a deeper bow full of respect to Harry.

Harry nodded. “Good. I summoned you here this night to make certain you had survived on that other world and to enquire if you were ready and willing to return. I hope that the next time we meet it will be face to face Shar.” He stood and motioned to the others within the elemental circles.

Dumbledore sighed as he heaved himself to his feet. His aching body wanted to sleep and rest but his mind was alive with the thirst for knowledge and the sheer delight to have met a Forgotten. With a deft sweep of his wand he caused the chairs he had conjured to vanish, unceremoniously dumping certain people onto their butts with squawks of protest and could not resist the chuckle. Harry flashed and surprised glance at the Headmaster and stifled the urge to laugh.

Shar, smirking, offered a deep bow to the Head Master and turned to Harry. “As do I Nameless, as do I.” He touched his gaze to those who watched by way of farewell and his gaze lingered longest on Hermione within her circle before sliding once more to Harry. “I have no doubt that I shall find the world much changed and most intriguing.”

Harry inclined his head by way of his own farewell and reached deep within himself to pick up once more the threads of control that bound the old magic. The circles began to pulse, glowing brighter and brighter and those within the elemental circles were aware of the pulse beat that was most closely described as a heartbeat the longer it endured. Dumbledore, eyes narrowed, extended all of his mastery of magic to follow the ebb and flow of the intricately woven magic and how Harry began to carefully unravel the knot.

‘Ah, he has talent. I was right about this one. Gently there, Harry. That feels like a major conjunction... Ah, yes. Good, my boy. Very good.’

The Great Hall was once again resonating; vibrating with the magic and the spectators had backed away from the circles. With a complex twisting of his fingers Harry took up the final chord of magic and severed it, allowing the power flows to fall away and the Great Hall

resounded with a bell like tone. Surprised Harry looked about him but neither the teachers nor Rowena seemed disturbed by the effect though the others present were looking about them in surprise. Before him Shar faded away and with an audible snap of energy the five circles flared with light and vanished. Shar vanished as the circle dissipated leaving behind the cushion he had been seated on as the Great hall was plunged into darkness.

Dumbledore was the first to break the silence as with a flick of his wand torches flared into life and the Hall brightened. He surveyed the damage done to the ceiling enchantment and considered this display of Rune Magic well worth the effort to replace the spells.

“So that is what you needed Fawkes’ feather for. To get in touch with your allies and let them know that they could soon return.” He shook out his robes and walked up to Harry.

Feeling the ebbing pulse of the rune magic still draining from Nameless he resisted the urge to grip his shoulder. He needed to remember that Harry had no idea that he knew who he was and this was not the time for such revelations.

Harry nodded and taking a deep breath in an attempt to steady himself after wielding the magic he walked back towards the head table, with each stride feeling the diminishing magic within him. Tonks, Hermione and Silvenestri moved to follow behind him though Rowena remained floating in place, watching with the eyes only an apparition could claim the ghostly lingering essence of the circles. By dawn the last of the circles magical emanations would be gone and until then she would linger to monitor the site until she considered it clear for the students to move freely within the Hall.

“Yes that is what I needed the feather for. I and my friends will be leaving you now to rest if you do not have any questions?” He was tired and wanted to sleep and he still had to make it to bed.

Professor Sprout was quick to ask a question before Harry had the chance to leave either by magical means or by the more mundane method of placing one foot before the other.

“Just how old are you Nameless? From that discussion with Shar you are at least 2000 years of age.” She eyed the young man who bore a striking resemblance to Harry but she could feel the magic in that distortion and wondered what he really looked like.

Harry smiled “No I am not that old. Some days I feel as young as sixteen and other days I feel positively ancient. I suppose you could say that I have the mind of a twenty three year old and the capability and training for magic of a two thousand year old. I am all of these ages and many more.” He proffered a small bow to the Professor by way of an apology for answering in a riddle.

Snape was next and both his voice and demeanor said he did not like this man who claimed to be a Dragon Lord and whose face was shielded with magic and so resembled Harry. “If you are a member of the Dragon Host then where is your dragon?” His voice held its classic sneer as he watched the man with the girls surrounding him. It reminded him of a harem.

Harry smiled, baring his teeth a little liking Snape as much as Snape like him. “She is around. If you must know then I suggest you talk to Dumbledore. After all, he has had men trying to find her for something a little over a month now. Last question, if you please.” He flashed a glance over those assembled trying to gage who it might be to ask the next question. ‘I just hope he doesn’t find out its Silvenestri.’

Minerva beat them, turning to face Harry in a swirl of dark green robes. “Tell me, Nameless. What do you have to do to join your ranks?” She walked slowly towards him, her head held high and no doubt in her voice.

Albus just raised an eyebrow at her comment wondering if she was willing to join Harry and his little group and on reflection he decided it was possible. Minerva had always had a mind of her own and a passion for causes that quite often had left him breathless. Everyone else in the Hall but Harry and Dumbledore looked at her in shock at the very thought that Minerva McGonagall might be willing to join a renegade in this war and not work with Dumbledore and the Order.

Harry considered the Professor for a long moment and the reactions of those others watching. "In this battle we are allies, not enemies and to succeed we must always remember that. If you wish to join with the group then go outside and into the Forbidden Forest and wait there for someone to come to you. Now, I beg you to excuse us. It has been a trying day and we all need to rest." His last words were uttered on a gust of wind that kicked up out of nowhere and he and his friends faded away.

Rowena observed the reactions of those who remained and faded out though she lingered as she began to cast charms to return the tables to their accustomed places. She paused, surprised to note that the cushion on which Shar had sat was still in existence and after a moment she charmed it to her room. No need to draw attention to this remnant of the night's activities.

Dumbledore walked over to Minerva and rested his good hand on her shoulder. "Minerva? What are you thinking? For all we know he could be willing to defeat Voldemort and his followers from becoming the Dark Lord of this time with the intention of defeating the Ministry and bringing back the Dragon Host. Why are you speaking of joining him?" He looked into her eyes trying to fathom what he saw there. 'I need to learn more of Harry as he is now, as he is when the Dragon Lord persona takes him and I can do that best if Minerva is willing to help.'

"Have you forgotten that I can sense other people's magical energy? Those four who came tonight have energy signatures very close to some of the students in this school. The signatures are close but not a perfect match." Minerva spoke to Albus though her gaze did tract to the other listeners. She did not know about the others but she suspected that Albus knew who Nameless was and possibly the identities of the girls with him.

Flitwick walked up to Minerva. "What did their energy's feel like? More appropriately I think the question should be 'Who' did their feel like?" He asked in his small voice while looking into the eyes of his good friend for many years.

Minerva's gaze tracked over each in turn and then around the Great Hall and up to study the disruption in the roof enchantment. "The one that he named Violet had an energy signature very close to that of Hermione Granger in both the depth and type of potential. Almost identical but marked by a difference best described I believe as organized chaos compared to Hermione's neatly organized energies. Silver was showing very strong powers that I equate to a Metamorphmagus and ability to match the powers reminiscent of Tonks. Again it is similar but very different." She paused to wait for questions but none came and so she continued. "As for the little girl... that one should be watched carefully. The signature I sensed in her is off the scale and difficult to read because of its intensity and there is only one person I know that has that distinctively pure and concentrated signature at so young an age. Harry's charge, Silvenestri has that spike that is very distinctive but you have to remember that if you find one person with such a signature then undoubtedly you will find another in the world who can mirror it."

Snape considered Minerva for a long moment. "Well then, I believe that we need to learn more of Harry's charge. We need to exactly who she is, where she comes from and if she knows anything about this Dragon Lord." 'And while we are at it I can finish my contest with her without the distraction of the class running out.' He mused.

Minerva looked at Snape with narrowed eyes. "I will not permit you to do anything to that child Snape. Not now or ever you, do you understand?" Her voice suggested that disobedience would incur retribution in a form that would make what the fake Moody had done to Malfoy seem to be a walk in the park compared to what Minerva would do to him.

Snape sniffed, glared at Minerva before nodding and then stalking out of the hall and down to his room's to think. Despite what Minerva thought they needed to gather intelligence on this mysterious little girl who could stand up to him in a staring contest and just now he needed to entertain himself by thinking of ways to take points from Potter for having a doppelganger walking around.

Professor Sprout considered the dark robed Potions Master as he stalked off before placing a hand on Minerva's shoulder. "What about

this Nameless or Lord Silver as he's known? What did you sense from him?"

“Now that is a mystery. His power is also off the usual scales I use to measure potential. In fact his power is marginally greater than yours Albus, if only barely and I sense too a lack of experience. It is very close to the potential I feel from Harry but it is not the same.”

Albus looked at the professors still gathered and then into Minerva's eyes "This is interesting and will need to be investigated but it does not answer my question. Why are you joining his ranks Minerva?" He was hoping that she would change her mind about joining this with this Lord Silver and his cohorts or that she would but would agree to tell him what she found out. His eyes looking deeply into hers carried this message and he could only hope that she would choose to heed it.

Minerva sighed softly and turned, walking toward the doors to the Great Hall. She smiled as she looked back and nodded farewell. "I am joining his ranks because I believe he will be the one to win this war. Not you or the Order, not Voldemort and his minions and not Fudge and his fools in the Ministry. I think it will be Nameless and his followers who will have the victory and I have waited a long time to see Voldemort fall. Now if that is all, I have a meeting to attend."

‘What then, Minerva? You just told the others his identity though they have not as yet realized it. The prophecy is known to us all and they will put the pieces together. While you join your Dragon Lord I ask you to remember what the Dragon Host was and do you think we can maintain a balance between the Muggle world and the magical world if the Host should return? I hope you think of that, my dear.’

Minerva McGonagall walked out of the castle and into the forest leaving a group of wondering professors and a very interested Dumbledore in the Great Hall to decide what it would be best to do concerning the Lord Silver and his army of Forgotten that would arrive to battle Voldemort.

[illegible]

McGonagall had to admit she had always had an attraction for power and powerful friends but unlike certain others she had never let it go to her head. Voldemort and his Death Eaters lived for power and little else and she had never been greedy for power.

‘Some days it is hard to believe that Tom was a class mate of mine. He always struck me as an odd boy though I thought initially that might have been the result of his Muggle father. I always had a feeling that he was going to do something that would make our year look bad and I guess you could say I was right. He makes Hogwarts look bad, not just our year.’ She mused.

She was at this time standing inside the Forbidden Forest with her wand at the ready in case of trouble and looking around trying to detect if any of Nameless’s friends were coming. The sound of Hagrid singing wafted through the forest with all the subtlety of fingernails on a blackboard and she had to smile fondly as the kind hearted half-giant walked out of the woods. He emerged from the castle side and had his crossbow at the ready as the Centaurs were still attacking anyone other than their own kind they chanced to find within the forest.

“Hello Professor. What brings you out into the woods tonight?” Hagrid asked taking a seat on a tree stump nearby and pulling a clay bottle from his coat. He took a sip before offering the bottle to Minerva.

“Like you, Hagrid, she is here to see if she can join us.” A soft voice issued from the forest before Minerva could accept the bottle and down a sip of Hagrid’s rather remarkable home brewed whisky. One sip of the brew was usually enough to get you merrily drunk or, as usually happened, pass out.

“Is that you, Gold?” McGonagall called into the woods her wand at the ready as Hagrid climbed to his feet with his crossbow primed and ready should they need to do battle with some denizen of the forest.

“No, but you are close Professor. It’s Violet. If both of you would please come this way, we can go meet with Nameless and some of your questions will be answered.” Hermione, still disguised, stepped out of the woods and with the half giant and Professor following she led them into the woods and to Silvenstri lair.



An hour of walking in the deeper darkness of the woods brought them into the clearing with the low mouthed cave on the far side. Seated at the cave mouth was Nameless and Silver in a deep embrace, mouths locked in a kiss while Silver ran her hands through his hair.

“Get a room you two!” Hermione called. “We have guests.”

Harry and Tonks broke apart as Hermione joined them and Harry, still in the guise of Nameless grinned at her, unrepentant.

Hermione snorted softly in disgust but could not quite hide the smile. ‘I swear they are going to be impossible once they can do that in public. They’ll never keep their hands off each other.’

“Ah, you’re here. Good.” Nameless looked to Hagrid and Minerva and ignored the looks he was being subjected to. Could he help it if he was so distracted by the charms of his lady that he was not prepared for their arrival? “Now then, what do you want to know before joining this group? After all, it is the Order that has more power right now than this small band and you would have more position and opportunity with them at this time. I ask you what it is that you want out of this?” Harry stood, Tonks rising with him and Hermione stood to one side, smirking at the amount of trouble Tonks was having straightening her robes and trying to look dignified.

“I consider it manners, Nameless, to not be canoodling in public and to have the grace to show the world your true face when you are enlisting supporters.” Minerva tartly commented, noting that Hagrid was peering around as though he expected something to emerge from the forest and he was not certain if it would be friend or foe. ‘It is time to see if my guess is correct and also to make them think a little on the seriousness of this endeavor. Goodness me, how do they expect to get anything done if they can’t keep their paws to themselves the minute they think they are alone?’

Harry smiled “How rude of me. Sorry Professor, but I assumed that you would have worked it out by now. Here let’s get rid of these faces and put on our real ones, ladies.” The older face of Harry melted away and the Harry Potter Minerva knew was standing before with Hermione on his left and Tonks hanging off his right arm. “There. Much better. Are there any questions Professor before we let you join

this group or change your memories of this meeting?” Harry gave Tonks a quick hug and watched as Hagrid gave him a quick glance and returned to his survey of the forest and Minerva folded her hands neatly before her. ‘God let them not change their minds. I really don’t want to cast that spell again.’

“Of course I know who you are, Harry Potter and I have a few things to discuss with you not the least of which is your amorous behavior at the most inappropriate moments. That we will leave for another time but we will discuss it, I assure you. Now then, why are you against Dumbledore? I thought you would be working with him to defeat Voldemort?” Minerva walked up to her two top students while looking at Tonks with a raised eyebrow at her clinging to Harry’s arm.

Harry smiled, running a hand over Tonks’ back while the other rested on his hip. “I am not so much against him as...” Harry hesitated under those intense eyes. Minerva McGonagall had always been able to make him stop and think with just a look. “He leaves out information that I need. It’s important information that I have a right to know and no matter how much I ask for it he ignores my requests.”

‘Demands and whining.’ Flashed through Minerva’s mind. ‘You really have no idea of how much that man tries to protect you, do you, young man? Ah well, what more can I expect considering the necessity of having you grow up at the Dursleys?’

“Then when he does tell me it’s too late for it to make a difference to the fight. I have to face Voldemort and how can I do that without all of the answers? I’m not really against him, Professor I’m just not working with him at the moment.”

‘You want all the answers do you? Do you even know all of the questions? Have you thought for a minute that perhaps Albus does not have the answers to the questions you do have? No, of course not. To the young everything is urgent and black and white. There are no shades of grey when you are sixteen.’

Hagrid was still looking around, peering into the woods when the sound of wood breaking was heard on the far side of the cave. Hagrid’s head snapped up and he looked eagerly in that direction.

Harry had to smile, knowing full well what the half giant was hoping to see. Hagrid had such a fascination for dragons.

“Silvenestri, do you have to be so loud? I’m trying to talk!” Harry yelled into the woods. /For a hunter, my dear, your so damned loud. /

/ Humph! You try catching deer in this thick forest when you’re my size and see just how quiet you are. / Was the tart come back.

“Harry, why are you yelling at a little girl?” McGonagall asked walking over to join Harry and Tonks.

Hermione smirked and decided to head into the cave. She knew what was going to happen next and while she liked the dragon she really was not up to witnessing her table manners... or lack there of.

Harry nodded at the Professor and smiled. Time to get one up on McGonagall, he decided. “Your right Professor, I am sorry I yelled at her. Silvenestri! I’m sorry for being crotchety. You can come in now and eat.” / And we are not done with that talk about size, my dear. After all, you are going to be the biggest dragon on the earth if we can’t get you to mate with a lesser. / Harry finished the thought with a sight laugh.

/ A lesser/ The hiss was full of indignant rage in his mind. / I’d like to see you mate with a common mutt/

The ground seemed to vibrate with each footstep as Silvenestri in full temper stomped into the clearing a rather large deer hanging from her mouth, blood streaming from the wound in its neck.

Minerva backed up at the sight before her while Hagrid looked on with awe at the silver dragon as she dropped her kill in the flattened grass patch next to the cave. Hagrid did a little wiggle of delight that dropped Harry’s jaw in shock as he watched the half giant take a bold step closer to watch the dragon crouch over her kill. Hagrid looked like he had received all of his Christmas presents at once and Harry had no doubt that he just wanted to spoil Silvenestri to death.

“Now, my dear, isn’t that a bit big for you?” Harry asked after seeing that Silvenestri had hunted one of the largest bucks he had ever seen.

/ You'll get fat and then those 'common mutt's' as you term them will be able to catch you in the mating flight. /

Silvenestri looked up at Harry and growled at him, baring her fangs before taking the head off the kill with one bite. / Dream on. I'm much too fast for those lesser curs and if you were any sort of Dragon Lord you would not even consider mentioning those dumb toy dragons in the same breath as 'mating flight'. I am very disappointed in you. /

Hermione peered around the entrance to the cave, disappointed that neither Hagrid nor the professor had taken to their heels at sight of the dragon before blanching at the crunch of bone and vanishing back inside.

Minerva did look a little green at the sight of Silvenestri tearing into her dinner but managed to contain the reflex to part with her last meal. "Harry, why is she eating now? I thought she ate at lunch and was in the Great Hall for dinner?" While she had thus far managed to keep her own dinner down she knew that her face must be turning greener by the second at the sight of Silvenestri ripping open the buck's belly and sticking her nose into the steaming entrails.

"Yes that is true, she had eaten but you see, it's been a week since she last had a fresh kill. She needs this now otherwise the whole school would know I am looking after a very young dragon and not a little girl who turned six last week." Harry watched undisturbed as Silvenestri took the hind leg of her kill between her forepaws and stripping the meat from it with gleaming bloodied teeth. The crunch of bone followed and Silvenestri's head again dipped to bury her nose deep in the disemboweled buck.

"How can you watch that?" Minerva turned away and fighting to keep her dinner down and noted Hermione just within the cave.

Harry smiled at her and shrugged. He was just glad that Silvenestri had a healthy appetite and looked around in time to see Hermione stick her head out of the cave and then vanish back inside on discovering that the dragon had not yet finished eating. Tonks had taken shelter from the sight by fitting her head in under Harry's arm and Hagrid was taking another cautious step closer to the feasting dragon, not at all disturbed by the gruesome sight.

“You get use to it after seeing her eat for six years, Professor. Was there anything else you wanted to know?”

Minerva waved a hand in the air absently, too busy trying not to lose her dignity and her dinner in one fell blow and taking the opportunity Hagrid jumped into the conversation.

“Harry why have you only told Tonks and Hermione here about Silvenestri and the other things you can do now? You know its not good to let young dragons gorge. They can get dragon colic.”

Harry blinked. Hagrid had not taken his eyes from Silvenestri. “I needed to tell Hermione because I needed her to look after her when I had class or was training. Besides, this is Hermione we are talking about. Can you really see her not finding out within a few weeks?” He ignored Hermione’s protest from within the cave mouth. “As for Tonks, well that should be easy enough to spot the reason.” Harry dropped his head to whisper to Tonks who nodded and hastily entered the cave.

Silvenestri belched, sitting back on her haunches and shaking her bloody head. Taking the belch as a signal that the coast was clear Hermione exited the cave and gave Harry a dirty look for his cheek and wishing that she could have been elsewhere while the dragon enjoyed her meal. A second belch rumbled through the clearing and the dragon settled down to cleaning her teeth with dexterous use of her tongue.

“Ok Harry that was all I wanted to know for now.” ‘Please, don’t let them be like teenage fraternities and want initiation ceremonies. I’m getting too old for this.’ “What do we need to do to join this group?” Minerva had a handle on her dinner now and was careful not to look directly at the bloody patch of ground that was all that remained of the buck.

“Nothing painful if that is what has you concerned. I’m actually going to give you something. For you a ring and a cloak, Professor and for Hagrid a ring at this time. There will be an overcoat made from the scales of Silvenestri’s last molt when I can get the time to make it. Think of them as Christmas presents from me.”

Tonks emerged from the cave and passed a silver cloak to Minerva that had a border of runes along the hemline. Harry pulled out of his belt pouch two of the rings that he had finished earlier that day for his friends.

“These rings let me contact you when I need you. Hagrid, I’ll get right on making that coat for you as I really don’t think a cloak would suit you very well.”

Minerva studied the ring Harry handed her and immediately noted the symbol on the face as being the same as the one that was on the fourth floor and a drop of Mercy was nestled within the dragon's eye. She noted that rings just like hers were worn by Hermione and Tonks' finger though Tonks wore hers on the ring finger of her left hand and had a diamond within the dragon's eye while Hermione wore her ring on her right hand.

Harry smiled at his two new members and suddenly feeling on top of the world. "There that was easy, wasn't it? Now I must go. After all, it's Christmas and that's the best time to be with your loved ones. The girls and I would like to celebrate alone so until the start of school, I bid you good-bye."

Minerva and Hagrid blinked at a sudden gust of wind and flash of light and when they opened their eyes they were standing before Hagrid's hut on the school grounds.

'I sincerely he did not mean he is compromising Miss Granger as well as Tonks. That boy must really give some thought to what he says.' Minerva huffed.

[illegible]

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Zesuit, Digi Bonds, bandgsecurtiyaw, White Tiger Black Lion, Silverscale, Mozes (Thanks Caption and I'm glade you enjoy it so much.), lucy-lollipop, Schnuff, Wytil, TimeReaper, HeWhoComesWithTheDawn, Blade-Claven, Harrie, Never Odd Or even, Eagle-Eyes, Bloodless Ace, Grey8, Schnuff.

## Chapter 18: Calm before War.

/ Telepathic /

12 February 1997 12:11 AM A.D

Harry was seated at the Gryffindor table reading his Book of Charms and manfully trying to ignore the girl to girl talk Tonks and Hermione were engaged in. He really did not want to know about the pro's and cons of shaving or waxing hair in rather personal places or which brand of personal hygiene aids for women were best... he refused to even think of the word Period or menstrual cycle or... delicately he shuddered and tried to concentrate on a particularly difficult charm.

Silvenestri was seated to the left of him and looking half asleep though he knew that was deceptive. His young dragon was never less than alert and considering the war of stares that was being waged between her and Professor Snape she was probably day dreaming about their next bout. Ginny, the most resent member to join his group was seated on his right and her acquisition to their ranks brought their number to five. With the presence of Ginny his core group now numbered five, seven if he included himself and Silvenestri in the count.

It took Harry a minute to realize that Tonks and Hermione had ceased their mysterious talk of secret women's business and that their voices had been replaced by a deeper pleading tone. Looking up Harry watched Ron trying to talk to Hermione. He was failing miserably beneath the baleful glare she centered on him and the weight of the dreaded silent treatment.

Hermione refused to talk to Ron over the Lavender incident some four mouths past and she had recently taken a new approach to ensuring that her displeasure got across to him. Counting softly Harry had not reached thirty before Hermione pointedly looked away. That was her latest weapon in the arsenal she used whenever Ron gathered his courage to talk to her.

He had to give Ron points for persistence if nothing else and Harry determined not to peeve Tonks. He had no intention of being subjected to similar torture.

Ginny glanced up from studying her potions tome to see what had attracted Harry's attention and with an amuse little snigger rolled her eyes at Ron. Closing the tome with a firm thud she turned her attention to her lunch shaking her head at her brothers continuing failure to get back together with Hermione.

"He's got a great deal of groveling to do before she will notice him again." Ginny muttered. "Idiot deserves it too but if she's not careful she chances going too far. Boys will only take so much of that kind of behavior. He'll give it away and start to look somewhere else. It's too easy to overdo the silent treatment and Ron's not the most patient of people."

Harry arched an eyebrow and turned to smile at her. Realizing that Harry had overheard her comment she smiled shyly at him and blushed then gave her attention to her lunch. Watching her Harry could not help but think back to the week before and to how Ginny Weasley had become a member of the group.

## Flashback

Harry frowned as he walked the shadowed hallways. It was late, deep in the night and he was looking for Silvenestri. He was becoming worried as his every attempt to contact her had thus far failed even his mental link to her was conspicuously neutral. Either she refused to acknowledge his attempts to contact her or something had happened to her and Silvenestri had never ignored his call before unless she was engaged in a particularly absorbing hunt.

He felt nothing over their shared link, not even the low rumble he associated with her intensity when hunting in her dragon form and he was worried. She had vanished earlier in the day while Harry and Hermione had been in their Charms class and while she had wandered off before she had always answered him when he called her.

Harry was dressed in his school robes having left his Dragon Lord regalia under Hermione's carefully set locking charms and wards. There had been little cause for him to wear the armor in the last months but he had the disturbing feeling that the time of relative peace was drawing to a close. There had been little intelligence on



the Death Eaters of late and he knew that Professor Dumbledore was disturbed by the silence from their enemies. If Dumbledore was worried he was wondering if he should not be panicking.

“Silvenestri! Where have you gone?” He called down yet another one of the hallways on the fifth floor.

Floor by floor he had been searching Hogwarts and floor by floor his level of concern rose. Whether in dragon form or as a little girl Silvenestri was his responsibility.

“Harry what are you yelling about?” Ginny walked around the corner just behind Harry curious as to his presence and a small smile gracing her face. She liked Harry and she had had a crush on him after first meeting him though she knew well enough that his interest lay elsewhere.

“Oh Ginny, it’s you. I’m trying to find Silvenestri. She wandered off while I was in class earlier today and now I can’t find her. I don’t want to trouble the teachers with this. Have you seen her?”

Harry looked anxiously up the length of the deserted hallway and stepped aside. Ginny paused as she came abreast of him and shook her head slightly.

“No I haven’t seen her since breakfast but if you like I can help you look for her.” Ginny flashed him a sunny smile and walked a couple of paces , glancing back over her shoulder at him, her long ruby red hair hiding most of her face. “Come on. She has to be around here somewhere.”

“Thanks, Ginny. I’ve got Tonks looking for her in the grounds and Hermione is in the dungeons so with us looking in the upper floors we should find her. Up to the sixth, I’ve just finished this floor.” Harry led the way toward the staircase leading up to the next floor.

Harry and Ginny systematically searched the sixth floor and had reached the seventh floor before Tonks arrived, a frown clearly stating before she spoke that she had had no luck. “Harry she wasn’t in the forest or anywhere in the grounds. Have you heard anything

from Hermione?" She said giving Ginny a smile and brief nod in greeting.

Harry shook his head trying not to show his near panic and led the way to the Room of Requirements, the last room to look into on this floor leaving. After this room there would be just the dungeon to search and since Hermione was already down there they would need to wait for her to get back to them.

Harry was a little ahead of Tonks and Ginny who were talking quietly and so he reached the room first and felt an upsurge of hope as the door was already visible. "That's hopeful. The door is invisible unless someone is in there. I hope its Silvenestri." He said and pushed open the door.

What lay on the other side was not exactly what Harry was hoping to find. Or rather it was exactly what he was hoping to find though not with someone who was not a member of his order standing behind him.

Silvenestri was indeed within the Room of Requirements but to Harry's consternation she lay in all of her draconic glory, her true form gleaming brilliant silver as she sunned herself on a tropical beach. The dragon was very deeply asleep and did not so much as twitch as he sucked in a startled breath. If he could just get Ginny away before she...

"Dragon." Ginny breathed eyes wide as she stared at the gleaming dragon soaking in the heat of the sun.

"Damn!" Harry whispered.

"Harry, I don't understand. How can a dragon be in the Room of Requirement? An unchained dragon at that?"

Having a brother who worked so closely with the great beasts Ginny knew exactly what to look for and when to be afraid. Charlie had told her a great deal about his work and how it was best to behave around the creatures and one thing she did know was that you did not startle a sleeping dragon. If you did you were likely to end up as breakfast before the creature was even fully awake.

Harry sighed softly and gently caught her elbow. He smiled at her and nodded to Tonks who was right behind them and she gently garbed Ginny from behind and pushed them both into the room. Harry slipped behind Tonks to securely close the door and block Ginny from using the door.

With a great heaving sigh, almost a moan, the silver form rolled slowly over, the long sinuous tail flicking sand up in a cloud as the dragon settled on its back, legs splayed as the graceful neck stretched out and the beast ground her back into the hot sand. Not once did the dragon give the appearance of having realized it had company.

“Harry? Tonks? What are you doing?” Ginny hissed. “We have to get out of here before it wakes up!”

“It’s alright, Ginny.” Tonks sighed. “Things are not quite what you think they are.”

“I don’t understand. That’s a dragon, though Charlie’s never mentioned that any of them are silver before.” Ginny stared at the somnolent dragon. “I didn’t know they liked to... look we have to go before it wakes up. I don’t fancy being an entrée. ”

Harry chuckled. “It’s okay. Really Tonks and I... well, we know this particular dragon. She won’t hurt us.”

“Harry, it’s a basic rule that you never go near a dragon and you never ever wake up a sleeping dragon. They bite first and think about it later! If they even remember their little wake up snack.”

“She does have a point, Harry.” Tonks murmured. “We were not here when she went to sleep and she won’t be expecting to find us here. Dragons are... well, dragons.”

“Don’t ever let Her hear you liken her to other dragons.” Harry advised. “She has definite defining lines between what we know as dragons and what she knows are dragons. I don’t see that there is any alternative. Ginny you’re about to make a choice.”

Harry pulled his wand from a pocket and glanced up as with a great groan the dragon ground her back into the hot sand and wiggled. Sand flew everywhere, sent into the air by the great tail thrashing from side to side and in seconds all three were imitating sand castles. Silvenestri blinked innocently at them and gave a massive yawn showing her white fangs to everyone and with a final wiggle and tail lash that resulted in a palm tree being hit a blow hard enough to send coconuts raining down to the sand the dragon rolled to her belly and shook the sand from her scales.

“Enough already!” Tonks screamed, shielding her eyes from the deluge of sand.

Ginny could only stare at the two and their apparent total lack of fear and at the silver form slowly pacing toward them across the stretch of beach. A final flick of the great silver wings and another wave of flying sand descended on them. Harry was glaring at the dragon and there was no fear in him at all, Ginny noted, only, if she could believe her eyes, fond amusement?

“Choices, Harry? What choices might they be? Dragon fricassee, perhaps?”

“Nothing like that, Ginny. What you are looking at is Silvenestri in her true form. She is a Silver Dragon, one of the Greater Dragons and only a few select people know that she is here in this time. They are supposed to be extinct, you see. We need to keep her a secret so your choice is either to join our group, keeping the secret of Silvenestri and help us in the war we are to wage against Voldemort,” he ignored her wince at the name of the Dark Lord. “Or have your memory altered so you don’t remember seeing Silvenestri in her true form. We could use your help.”

Harry watched her closely, his wand in hand and ready as Tonks moved to stand by the door to ensure that no one could walk in on them. Silvenestri had plopped her haunches into the sand and now sat watching the three humans. Absently she picked at her teeth, failing to notice that Ginny turned pale at her actions, more concerned with picking out a stray bit of flesh she had missed earlier in her hunt.

‘Thanks, Silvenestri. I really needed you to frighten her. Please Ginny. Please take the offer of joining the group. I have had to perform this spell too many times for my liking this year. Charlie showed me just how dangerous it can be and I don’t want to have to use it again. Especially not on another Weasley.’

Ginny looked wide eyed at the dragon that stretched out its great head and gently butted against Harry’s side. After all the tales Charlie had told her about dragons this seemed so impossible yet she was sure she was not dreaming. Her gaze settled on Tonks who had locked the door and walked over to rejoin them and then back to Harry who was absently scratching that great nose resting on the sand at his side.

“I’m going to be practical about this so don’t be shocked. What do I get out of it if I join this order of yours, Harry? After all the Order of the Phoenix is offering me training that may just keep me alive and my family are members. You are asking me to betray their confidence in me and all you are offering me is my memories.” Ginny folded her arms across her chest and glared first at Harry and then at the dragon and Tonks. She was a Weasley and she was not a coward but neither was she a fool. She just hoped that she could remember what she was sure was her finest hour when she left this room.

Harry smiled at her. ‘Ah, Ginny! You are just like your mother and have to complicate things with questions. Stubborn too. That look is Mrs. Weasley to a T. She does have a point though. Her family does belong to the Order of the Phoenix and they are loyal. What do I do? I really don’t want to cast that damn spell.’

Tonks began to finger comb the sand out of her hair as she watched the play of emotion over Harry’s face. Clearly when he had offered her the place within his inner circle he had not considered her loyalty to her family. He should have, Tonks mused. The Weasley’s were not fools and they were very close knit with one notable exception in Percy. His turning his back on the family had hurt them all and the rest of the family had become closer than ever. Harry was going to need to tread very carefully here.

“Ginny,” Harry began trying to pick his words with great care. “I am hoping that you will choose to become a part of the group that I have gathered to help in the war that is to come. The Order of the Phoenix too is dedicated to battling Vol... The Dark Lord” He amended at her flinch. “At some point I intend to approach the Order and inform them of the group who are working with me outside of their ranks. I do not see that you could not remain a part of them and still be a part of what I am trying to do. I would not expect you to betray any confidences or tell me anything that happens within the Order of the Phoenix, which as a matter of fact, I still belong to, as does Tonks and certain others in the group. I suppose you could say we are a spin off of the central group. We all want the same thing, after all and we have to work together if we hope to take down Vol... The Dark Lord. We can train you in certain magic that is not commonly in use in this day and age and will be of use in the fight to come.”

Ginny was watching him closely, particularly the expressions flitting across his face as he searched for the right words. He glanced at Tonks who nodded slightly, approving of the offer he had made to her.

“I do ask that if you join us you refrain from mentioning us at this time to anyone else and that includes other members of the Order of the Phoenix. Until we are ready we need to tread with care. We can’t afford for The Dark Lord to learn about us until we are stronger. All you have to do is make the choice of what you want to do. If you touch the tip of my wand you will forget what has happened here today and if you take the ring I am offering you then you can become a part of the group and learn what we have to teach you but you still can remain a member of the Order of the Phoenix. Please, if you take the ring, be discreet I’m not going to make the choice for you.”

Harry reached into a pocket of his robes and his fingers closed on one of the silver rings he carried there. With a deep breath he held the ring out to Ginny in his left hand while he held his wand in his right hand. He met her gaze for a long moment and waited.

Ginny looked at the hands held out to her, one baring a ring and the other a wand. He was not making her choice for her? That was a lie because hanging over her was the threat of taking her memories away and that was something she could not abide. There had been

that time when Charlie had been acting strangely and then that more recent occasion when Charlie had been in hospital and the twins and Ron had been acting odd. She now had a very good idea of why her brothers had not seemed to be them selves. Did Harry not think she was capable of putting two and two together and coming up with four?

'It's time to decide. I can at least watch him and do my best to see that he does not hurt my family.'

Ginny reached carefully toward Harry and her fingers closed around the silver ring as her eyes locked with Harry's. He smiled at her and she nodded.

End Flashback

Harry watched as Silvenestri tucked into the food wondering where that little girl body could store all that she ate. With a quiet sigh he looked around the Great Hall to see that some of the students were starting to leave and head to their first afternoon class. He and Hermione had a free class now in which they should be studying up on the charms test coming up but they had been studying every chance they got so that they could make use of this free time to go to the Library. They intended to search as much of the Library as they could in an attempt to learn if there was any references to what might be the city called Ice Cliff. They needed to find the city and realistically he knew that he was not just going to open a book and find a reference to it before they had to head off to their Charms class later that afternoon. They had been searching in the Library at every opportunity and thus far had found no references to an ancient city that might lead them to Ice Cliff.

Tonks looked up to see Harry and the far off look on his face and smiled at Hermione. Inclining her head to Harry she sighed. "What's the bet he is thinking about the war again?" She said while getting to her feet.

Hermione nodded and joined her in walking around the table and standing on either side of Harry to look down at him. He was still lost in thought and Hermione chuckled. "I'll take that bet and say he is thinking of you." She whispered to Tonks.

Tonks grinned, pleased at the notion and then looked down at Harry again. "Harry, what are you thinking about my love?" Tonks whispered into his ear and one arm curled to rest around his shoulders.

"Oh nothing much. Just thinking about the war and how I'm going to make it to Norway and from there to where Ice Cliff is, if it's not sunk or encased in a blanket of ice. But if you like I can give some thought to having my wicked way with both of you lovely ladies?" He flashed a wicked smile as he jumped up and run from the hall.

Both Hermione and Tonks were on his tail a moment later trying to catch him with shocked looks on their faces.

Silvenestri looked up from her lunch, a strip of bacon hanging between her teeth as she considered the hasty exits just made and smiled then looked over at Ginny. The red head was watching the door too and smiling.

"What's the betting pool in the common room up to now on which of them Harry is bedding?" She asked and winced as Harry gave a cry of pain from the entrance hall. "Hmm that one must of hurt."

Ginny pursed her lips, trying to think of what the last figures in the pool were but it was Dean who answered Silvenestri's question. "The pool is up to 150 Galleons right now. Do you want to place a bet Silvenestri?" he said and winced as from outside the hall Harry gave a high pitch scream as one of the girls hit him with another spell. "What on earth are they hitting him with?"

"No, I don't want to bet. I thought if I put you all out of your misery by telling you which he is bedding then I get the gold. Correct?" Silvenestri said just as Harry come running back into the hall with his robes smoking on his left shoulder and a slash in the back of the robes.

Hermione and Tonks were right behind him both with their wands out trying to get a shot at him as he weaved his way around the hall.

"Oh this is even better. What's the bet that Tonks catches him first?" She said watching with wide eyed delight as they started a lap of the



hall, Harry jumping over tables and chairs to avoid being hit again every now and then throwing a chair between him and the girls to take a spell thrown at him.

Ginny looked anxiously at the head table where some of the teachers still remained, including Professor Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall. Both seemed to be ignoring the goings on in the hall though they certainly could not miss what was happening.

Everyone chuckled as first Dean and then Ron placed bets that Hermione would catch Harry first and then everyone was placing bets as to which of the pursuers would be first to corner and then catch their prey. Silvanus with a wide smile was writing down all the bets as quickly as she could in the front cover of Harry's Charms book and every now and then she would look over to see how Harry was doing.

Meanwhile at the head table Dumbledore and McGonagall were watching Harry as he started on his second lap of the Great Hall with Tonks hard on his heels and Hermione scrambling over the Slytherin table to make up ground and bring her even with Tonks once more.

"What do you say Minerva. Tonks to catch him first?" Dumbledore wiggled his eyebrows and timed his exit from the head table as Harry came streaking past.

"Professor!" Harry panted.

Tonks and Hermione sudden stops as Dumbledore swept past Harry with Minerva at his side and the twinkling blue eyes he turned to both women saw wide smiles dawn.

"Don't let us stop you, ladies." He murmured and winked.

With a yelp Harry was off again, the teachers remaining at the head table looked scandalized and the students at the Gryffindor table hooted in delight. Tonks and Hermione were in hot pursuit and Dumbledore leaned over Silvanus.

"Ten Galleons on Tonks to win, my dear." Dumbledore whispered.

Minerva shook her head, watching the headmasters antics and sniggered as one by one the teachers remaining in the great hall placed small bets, joining in the spirit of the game. To her absolute astonishment Snape placed a bet and she caught the twinkle in Dumbledore's eye.

'Ah, to be young again and carefree.' Dumbledore watched the race with a nostalgic look in his eye. 'I really should have called a halt to the game I suppose but it is nice to see them all having fun for a change. Too long has the air been somber at Hogwarts and I fear that there shall be trouble soon. The Death Eaters have been too quiet of late and my agents whisper at last that there is movement in their numbers.'

Everyone watched the race with growing interest as first Hermione and then Tonks made up ground on Harry. The end came suddenly, with Tonks taking a leaf out of Hermione's book and using the Slytherin table as a short cut to take Harry down in a flying tackle. With a shriek of delight Tonks had her wand pointed at Harry and let loose with a tickle charm and for good measure gripped her wand with her teeth and set to tickling him with both hands. Hermione came to a stumbling stop, considered the two on the floor for a moment and with a wicked grin launched herself into the squirming mass of limbs and shrieks.

Silvenestri smiled and referring to the lists she had scrawled in the tome started to divide the money between the winners. As the students from the other houses wandered off, some happy with having won their wagers and others grumbling that they thought Hermione could run faster than that Silvenestri motioned to the Gryffindor's remaining at the table and whispered to them to tell them to be in the common room tonight and she would tell them who it was who would win the 150 Galleons.

There were cheers from around the table and no one seemed to be paying attention at all to Harry's cries for help.

[illegible]

Later that day found Harry seated in the charms room watching as Flitwick talked about some of the more uncommon defending charms know to be used for protecting houses and items a wizard might own. He was only listening to the professor with half of his attention as he was still wondering what had come over them all in the Great Hall some hours ago. His robes had been repaired with a quick flick of the wand but the burn from Tonks fire charm had taken a little more effort to re-pair.

/This is boring / Harry thought taking notes and flicked his gaze at Silvenestri where she was curled in the corner of the room with her head resting on the book Hermione had given her for Christmas. /We should be trying to find Ice Cliff, not sitting here talking about how to charm a pocket to scream 'get your fingers out of me' /

Hermione noticed Harry seemed to be about to drop off and elbowed him in the side. A second elbow in the side was accompanied by a hissed "Pay attention."

Harry sighed but smiled at her and looked at Professor Flitwick only to nearly fall out of his chair. Rowena had came though the wall behind the short professor and stood right where the tiny professor had been standing a moment before a large smile on her face. The smile grew as the students stopped paying attention to Flitwick and stared at her with open mouths. Everyone had seen the portrait and knew who this apparition was not though they seemed to be having difficulty believing that the ghost of Rowena Ravenclaw had popped into the charms class to pass the time of day.

Flitwick became aware of the new point of interest for his class, the wide eyed looks common to all accept for Harry who was almost falling out of his chair as he tried not to laugh at the look on everyone's faces.

"What are you all looking at? Mr. Potter do calm down." Flitwick frowned at his class and turned to see Rowena hovering behind him. The little professor arched a rather bushy eyebrow and very politely bowed to the ghost.

"Miss Ravenclaw to what do we owe the pleasure of your company?" Flitwick asked and though he had had one or two occasions to meet

the ghost in the past he could not quiet keep the awe out of his voice. He was rather glad that for once he was not perched atop his pile of books if he was to have the ghost of one of the Founders in class today.

“Why, Flitwick.” Rowena positively purred, teasing the little professor shamelessly and winking at him. “I thought I’d just stop by and seeing how the students are doing and its Mrs. Ravenclaw not Miss.”

With a flirtatious flick of her head she ghosted gently about the class room, looking with interest at the students and finally coming to a halt and hovering over Silvenestri to see what she was reading or rather, pretending to read.

“Well, well. We appear to have a special guest today. Now class, let us get back to work on that home shielding charm.” Flitwick watched for a moment as Rowena struck up a conversation with Silvenestri and with a sharp tap of his foot drew the student’s attention back to him. He frowned at the class demanding their attention and that they ignore the conversation going on between the ghost and the little girl talking about the aspects of the school that amused the child.

After a few minutes of listening to the conversation between the two Harry found it far more interesting to pay attention to the professor’s lesson and he had only just finished his assigned work when Silvenestri, with a startled cry went very stiff and stared at nothing.

/Silvenestri? What’s the matter/ He almost fell out of his chair in his haste to reach her. Rowena hovered anxiously over her and Hermione was quick to join him. “Silv...”

Hermione gasped, almost knocking Harry over as he froze between her and Silvenestri. As yet the remainder of the class did not seem aware that anything was wrong and she hoped they remained attentive to the professor.

“Harry what’s wrong?” Hermione whispered.

“I...” Harry shuddered. “I... don’t know... Shit!” Harry shook himself and for an instant there was both fear and rage reflected in his eyes.

Then he turned to Hermione and there was grim determination on his face. "Get ready."

"Mr. Potter! Where do you think you are going!" Professor Flitwick shouted, incensed as Harry spun and ran from the classroom, Silvenestri on his heels and the ghost of Rowena Ravenclaw floating above him.

"Sorry Professor, got to run!" Harry gasped out just before the door closed on Silvenestri's heels and right through Rowena.

Harry raced down the hallway and jammed the ring he wore hard into his finger, drawing a single drop of blood to coat the inner circle of the ring. He needed to find his armor and his group would be alerted by his blood. It was time.

In the Charms classroom Hermione gasped and looked down at her ring. The silver colored metal circling her finger radiated heat and an overwhelming sense of summoning swept through her. She was needed and she knew that everyone who wore such a ring would feel the pull. With a quickly muttered apology to the professor she was out of the classroom and running to meet with the others.

Outside in the Care of Magical Creatures class Hagrid and Ginny both gasped and garbed their rings at the sudden flush of warmth. With startled looks at each other Hagrid dismissed the class and dispatched them to their individual common rooms and then he and Ginny were racing across the grass and up the hill toward the castle.

Tonks, who had had a miserable morning and was now lying in her bed taking an afternoon nap and wondering why she had spent the morning throwing up and yet now felt quite alright, if somewhat tired stretched and wished she could fall to sleep. She was tired, but she could not quite relax enough to sleep.

"What was with that this morning?" She asked herself but her train of thought was cut when her ring went warm. "Harry." She whispered and reached for her clothes.

Minerva McGonagall was sitting in her office enjoying a particularly nice blend of tea she reserved for those moments when she needed

to relax after dealing with particularly dense first year students who seemed incapable of following the simplest of instructions. There was a tea for every occasion and this afternoon she definitely needed this particular blend. Her eyes widened and the cup froze half way to her lips as the ring circling her finger flushed with warmth. Taking a deep breath the Professor looked at the ring then set aside the cup, promised herself a stronger blend when she returned as she was likely to need it and quickly left her office. A quick look around the hallway to ensure there were no witnesses and Professor Minerva McGonagall, deputy headmistress of Hogwarts hitched up her robe and sprinted for the painting of a particular founder of Hogwarts.

[illegible]

Harry hurried across the main room of Rowena's suite and nodded to Minerva as she arrived dressed in the black robes and silver cloak that Hermione and Tonks had worn on Christmas night. There was no sign now of the prim and proper professor of Hogwarts. Minerva nodded briefly to him and followed him into the next room, her expression serious.

“Where are they Professor?” He asked while heading over to the teleporting room and to the new changing room that had been added to Rowena’s suite of rooms for any one who needed to change before combat.

'Thank goodness Rowena let us add the change room. I really don't want to walk in on any of the girls changing... other than Tonks that is.' He finished that thought with a small smile while pulling his armour from its stand.

“They are at the edge of Hogsmeade’s and are heading this way. I’m not sure I understand why they are moving so slowly. At the speed they are moving it will be at least a half-hour before they arrive.” Minerva said, placing her wand carefully so that she could reach it easily at need.

“That long?” Harry frowned; concerned at the time it was taking though every delay now gave his people and the other defenders of Hogwarts time to prepare. “Get everyone ready as quickly as possible

and tell them what we are going to be fighting. There has to be more to this than we know. Try to find out what we are going to be fighting other than Dragons.” Harry called from the changing room before starting to pull off his robes.

‘Thank god I can sense lesser and greater dragons through Silvenestri. Why would dragons be attacking Hogwarts?’ He turned to his armour and reached for the undershirt.

Minerva nodded and turned as the door opened to reveal Hermione and Ginny and she motioned them into the second changing room with some impatience.

/Minerva, there are Death Eaters, two to a dragon. Voldemort has been busy and this is a combination that was not considered before. A mistake, obviously. I trust our young Mr. Potter will be up to the task of defending Hogwarts. Good luck my dear. / Dumbledore’s message caressed her awareness and his mental tone sounded as calm as the man usually did. From his tone she could not tell if he was concerned or not by the combination of Death Eaters and dragons.

Hagrid came through the door scowling and pulling on the massive silver overcoat Harry had made for him over black pants and shirt, his crossbow hidden within the coat’s magical bindings. “What is this all about Professor?” He rumbled seeing Minerva standing by the fire.

“Voldemort and his forces are on the way to Hogwarts and they have dragons. Get ready, Hagrid. This will be unlike any other fight we have engaged in.”

Pulling out her wand she concentrated for a moment and with a wave and softly uttered command word brought to life a 3D image of the castle and the ground surrounding it. The scene filled the middle of the room much like the representation Lupin had made at the start of the year for his dragon work.

Tonks appeared dressed in her battle robes and cloak and her wand out and ready for anything. “Where do we have to be Minerva?” She said when she noted the image in the middle of the room.

“From what Rowena has told me there are five key points to the castle's defenses. The four towers at the corners of the castle and the Astronomy tower in the centre are the key points to holding the castle against air and ground attacks.” Minerva flicked her wand and the five towers showed in red on the image all other towers showing in a light gray.

“And that is exactly where I want you to be placed for this attack.” Harry said appearing from the changing room now clad in his armour and cloak. “Professor you're to take the North tower, please with Hagrid in the south, Hermione to the east and Ginny in the west. Tonks you're the most powerful here in the old magic out of everyone here other than me so I need you in the Astronomy tower. You'll need to cover all four towers and help as best you can if the tower defenses weaken and also keep your attention on me while I deal with the dragons.” ‘And just where did Voldemort and his slimy Death Eaters get dragons, I wonder? Better yet, how did he get them to cooperate with his Death Eaters?’

Tonks nodded and walked over to Harry planted a quick kiss on his lips and watched in silence as he left the room his silver cloak blowing out behind him.

Standing at his window a few minutes later Dumbledore watched the silver cloaked figure running across the grounds of Hogwarts. He leaned forward slightly and watched the figure run into the Forbidden Forest and he sighed. They were all going to have to fight and fight well this day.

‘Off to fight Harry?’ he thought before turning to the fire and sending the first of the floo summons to summon his members of the Order of the Phoenix.

Already he had the teachers sending the students to their common rooms and setting teachers as guards over them. Soon the first of the Order would arrive and he only hoped that they would be enough to deal with the dragons.

‘Wish you did not have to fight, my boy. Luck to you, Harry.’



Minerva reached her tower first to find that the suits of armour normally lining the walls of the room were all gathered in orderly ranks and each was armed with a longbow though no arrows were in evidence. At her entrance with a great clanging the armour snapped to attention, standing straighter if at all possible and the visors of the helmets turned to face her.

“Oh you’re under my command I see. Well then, get ready and only fire when I tell you to.” She strode to the window and the suits of armour clanged along behind her, taking up position and standing ready for the fight. Minerva smiled and sighed softly, knowing that the other three towers would have just as many defenders.

Tonks reached the Astronomy tower and looked down in time to see Dumbledore and most of the schools compliment of Professors running out of the castle and to the main gate. She knew that they would stand there to meet the attackers and wondered where the other members of the Order of the Phoenix were placed. Her attention was caught from the tower where Hermione stood guard by a shower of purple sparks and she knew it was Hermione’s signal that she was ready and the other towers were not far behind in signaling their readiness.

An earth shaking roar erupted from the Forbidden Forest and she craned her neck to see what was going on. Silvenestri appeared flying out of the clouds to the south and passed Tonks position on the Astronomy tower and she saw the small figure of Harry give her a nod as they passed.

Down on the ground Professor Dumbledore and the other Professors looked up to see the silver dragon wheel across the sky, flying low over the Astronomy tower and then with a seemingly lazy flap of massive wings vanish back into the clouds.

Albus Dumbledore nodded slightly at the sight smiling in appreciation of the beauty of the beast. He had seen many things in his life time but a dragon in flight was always beautiful to watch and especially one so young and nimble.

‘Good luck Harry.’ He thought softly to the dragon as it vanished into the cloud cover. ‘Be careful, young man. This is only the beginning.’

Mad Eye Moody moved to flank Dumbledore and his magical eye was fixed firmly on the clouds. "Let's hope that beast is on our side." Moody muttered and his magical eye revolved to centre on the group of Death Eaters and Trolls now approaching the main gate.

[illegible]

Thanks to the following reviewers:

Athenakitty, Boilerfan2001, Silverscale, Grey8, fireflashphoenix, Blade-Claven, kupchoi, goddessa39, danielc (Tonks choose to ware the ring on that finger,) mosleyn001, sakura13, tidus4yuna, anti-thule, Bobboky, lucy-lollipop, Rogue7.

## Chapter 19: Dragon Flight

12 February 1997 15:11 AM A.D

Dumbledore

Dumbledore nodded absently his attention on the approaching attackers but his head snapped up and he searched the sky when another resounding roar rang out. The headmaster sucked in a sharp breath as he counted the massive shapes of six dragons flying out of the heavy cloud cover. For a moment the old man considered swearing as he identified the beasts, two Hungarian Horntails, three Welsh Green's and a Chinese Fireball. The ragged formation flew in from the same general direction as the small army of Voldemort's minions. Nor was it just dragons flying loose as each beast bore two riders on their backs, black robes billowing in the wind and white masks shielding their faces.

"Six?" Dumbledore whispered, aghast as the dragons passed overhead and with graceful tilts of their wings circled back to their own lines and with almost negligible flaps of their great pinions rose into the concealment of the cloud cover once again. "I knew he had a few dragons but this many?"

There was a resounding silence from those who stood with him as the defenders of Hogwarts considered the forces massed against them and the difficulties now more than doubled with the arrival of a force of dragons. The horde arrayed against the defenders were bellowing and screaming, working themselves up into a frenzy, spurred on by the sight of the dragons.

Moody's magical eye was trained on the clouds and clearly tracking what the others could not see. "I sincerely hope that Dragon we saw earlier is going to help us, not join with the others. It will take Charley at least half an hour to reach us with enough tamers to take down those beasts."

The first of the Trolls was now nearing effective attack range, bellowing and thumping their clubs against the ground as they came and the defenders braced themselves, their attention shifting back to what was now the immediate threat. They could only trust in each

others skills and to watch the backs of those nearest them. None of the defenders would run from either the ground based attackers or the airborne threat.

Dumbledore nodded in absent agreement and silently placed his trust in Harry and his dragon to guard the skies above the school. Hogwarts had other defenders, not just those gathered here and though at this time he could not see them he had no doubt that they would fight to preserve the lives of the students. He fleetingly sent a thought to Minerva wishing her well and focused his attention on the battle about to be joined.

"I know that the dragon and her rider will help defend the school. That she will defend is not in question. What is of more importance is how effective she can be against so many. Six is more than I expected."

He noted just before they closed into combat that from somewhere on the eastern side magic was being cast when a Troll was forced back all of two steps. He sighed softly, knowing that one of Harry's core groups had decided to take the fight to their attackers.

Then there was no more time for distractions.

[illegible]

Harry

Harry was at that very moment thinking along those exact lines. Settled securely to Silvenestri's back as they arced above the clouds, his eyes scanning the thick cottony mass for signs of the intruders he could only wonder how he was going to beat six lesser dragons. With his own power weakened somewhat by his renewed youth and a very young greater dragon beneath him he knew he must exercise extreme caution dealing with this enemy. One or two lesser beasts he was sure he could handle but six?

One of the smaller nimble Welsh Greens exploded from the blanketing clouds and reared up in front of Silvenestri talons extended in challenge and his breath hissing from straining lungs. The thunder of the air was deafening as the beast back winged to

maintain that hover for a split second and then those wide glinting wings folded and the beast dived, talons missing her by a few paltry feet and he was gone into the cover of the clouds.

Harry trembled, shocked by the sheer speed and nimbleness of the beast. He had been thinking of relying on Silvenestri's speed and her dexterity to keep them safe in this combat but now he needed to rethink his strategy. He was not going to injure himself or his dragon because he did not think through and modify his strategy at need. The Welsh Green's were obviously going to be far faster and more maneuverable than he had assumed.

At least he had had warning not to underestimate their rivals and in the lesson neither he nor Silvenestri had been injured.

He dared not permit his dragon to know that he feared for their survival. He dared not permit her to know that he doubted her abilities. Now above all times Silvenestri needed all of his confidence. They **WOULD** prevail.

"Damn. Silvenestri, my love, let's teach these guys how you really fly a dragon in battle." Harry shouted, well aware of the shudder that had run through his mount at the nearness of the green. "Let's show them how a real dragon and her rider can fight."

Silvenestri issued a deep throated growl and lowered one wing tip, turning in a blindingly fast move and as she came around into the dive Harry felt his confidence rise. Silvenestri might still have the edge over the greens. She could literally turn on a wing tip and that was an advantage they would need to employ. Her ability to make so tight a turn was beyond even the greens and the rate of their descent whistled the wind past his ears. Lips drawn back in a feral grin, fangs glinting in the sunlight the silver dragon folded her wings and they dropped like a stone toward the clouds in pursuit of the insolent green.

Marking that glint of bright green against the darker grey of the clouds that was the fast vanishing tail of the green dragon Silvenestri set her course and plummeted, confident enough in her aerial skills that if she did not hit that somewhat larger bulk concealed within the clouds that she could pull out of her dive before they crashed to earth. She

would show the insolent lesser beast that a Silver was far superior to his skills in the air.

The disturbance of displaced air as they plummeted through the clouds must have warned their prey, Harry decided, heart in his mouth with anxiety. In the split second before the dragons clashed he saw the two Death Eaters shift their positions to either side of the straining greens neck, giving themselves some cover from the pursuing Silver. He felt his dragon reach extending herself to the limit and felt the quiver in her great body and then she lunged, her claws straining to gain a grip on green hide and her teeth snapping just short of their mark.

The Death Eaters cursed into the wind and he caught the unmistakable tang of magic as they sought to steady themselves. He frowned, noting what he termed a pathetic attempt at a rider's harness they were using and how it would unbalance the beast as they sought to shelter under the greens neck, protected from falling by levitation charms. Their cowardice in protecting themselves from the raking talons of the silver dragon left the green exposed and he doubted that either rider had time to note the small figure clinging to the gleaming silver back as they sought to protect themselves from her attack.

The Dragon Lord within him was incensed at their disregard for their mounts safety. Their craven cowardice in protecting their own hides left the green undefended. He would gain no advantage or aid in defending himself without his riders use of magic to ward off either magical attacks directed against him or against the oncoming silver out to dig her talons into his hide and rake him from tail to neck.

Harry growled, infuriated that anyone should ride a dragon into combat and not care for their mounts safety. The beast should be their first priority, not their last. They seemed to have no concept of the art of combat riding and this ignorance was going to be his greatest ally. His chances against so many opponents now had risen a notch or three with the obvious inexperience of the team. Team? He could not even call them that and if the other riders and their mounts were equally as novice as this beast and his riders then that

inexperience would gain he and Silvenestri a fighting chance against them.

His growl turned into a snarl as the green dipped, his muscles straining as he sought to throw himself sideways to escape much of the force Silvenestri had gained from her dive and was transmitted through her speed into the razor claws now extended and sinking into green scaled hide. The Green roared with pain but his maneuver had earned him a reprieve, taking him out from under the silver and as he sought wing room Harry gained a clear view of the beasts head as they overshot their target.

Centered in the forehead of the Welsh Green was a glowing rune.

/Those bastards are using runes to control them/ He screamed this observation through their telepathic link, vocal speech being useless in combat. The raging winds caused by their speed made speech impossible.

The green was far from finished. Gaining a little wing room as the silver shot over him he thrust himself forward. Neck outstretched and fangs snapping, angling his body to lash his tail and attempt to hook his fore talons into the silver tail.

Silvenestri grunted fighting to back wing in desperation, trying to negate the advantage to the green at her miscalculation. With her vulnerable belly exposed to the greens snapping teeth she had more things to think about than human magic. The green was proving to be a canny fighter and was taking every advantage he could from the combat.

Straining she managed to hook a claw in a body ridge and hang on, stiffening her leg and keeping the greens teeth from her belly. Snarling she locked her neck around the greens and considered what next to do.

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Tonks

Tonks was absorbed with watching the battle taking place on the ground, her eyes narrowed and wand raised to let loose another charm when roars from above distracted her. She looked up, squinting as she tried to peer through the cloud cover. Dragons bellowed again and she heard the pain in the sound and swallowed with difficulty. Something was happening in there, hidden from view and she wondered that even the great beasts could see enough to engage in battle.

The clouds roiled for an instant and Tonks gasped as the interlocked forms of silver and green plunged through the cloud canopy. Silvenestri was locked to the green, necks entwined and her front claws scrambling at the green shoulder. The Welsh Green and the Silver were plummeting for the ground at high speed, neither seemed interested in supporting their bulk as the green, side on to the silver lashed at Silvenestri with his tail, rear legs pumping as he tried to rake the smaller dragons flank.

“Oh my...!”

Tonks gasp, fingers convulsing around the wand as Harry freed himself from the fighting harness and jump from Silvenestri’s neck and onto the greens shoulder. The green roared, trying to flare his wings to capture the wind of their fall and generate some lift but Silvenestri’s bulk trapped one wing, limiting his movement and they plunged down. Harry seemed unaware of their plunge, working his way to the neck ridge and to the securing buckles of the riding harness.

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Harry

He had reached the straps with out either of the two Death Eaters cowering beneath the dragon’s neck noting his presence. One at least seemed to be intent on trying to reach the lower of Silvenestri’s claws though what he thought he was going to do when he reached her Harry had no idea. The man seemed to have totally forgotten that he had a wand and was capable of magic. No doubt it had something to do with the Fear aura the dragons were generating which could cower humans who would normally consider themselves strong.



Dragons tended to make people feel insignificant but at least one of these Death Eaters seemed to be getting over his fear as he was taking some action.

“I think it’s time for you two to leave this fight and learn how to fly fast! How well can you levitate?” Harry shouted loud enough for the nearest rider to hear him over the screaming wind. “Ta ta!”

The nearer Death Eater looked up at Harry and behind the mask his eye grew wide. Silvenestri bellowed her great wings snapping wide as she tried to arrest their downward plunge. Harry hooked the blade of his sword under the leather strap and then pulled back with all of his strength. There was no time to cut through the harness with a knife blade and he trusted the green’s hide to resist the blade. He leapt clear of the lashing harness as it snapped cleanly, the weight of the Death Eaters aiding its parting and both men screamed shrilly as they slipped away from the entwined dragons and plummeted toward the ground. Both Death Eaters screamed as they slipped away from the dragons back and began their own plummet to possible doom.

Silvenestri welcomed back her rider with a roar that was echoed by the Welsh Green. Harry threw himself across the green back, fingers grasping for the riding straps and as he pulled himself up onto the silver shoulder Silvenestri pushed away from the green. The male dragon was shaking his head furiously, enabling Harry to see that the glowing rune was now dark and he grinned a feral smirk. The liberated beast spread his great green wings and almost effortlessly gained control of his flight, the uncontrolled plunge swiftly becoming a supported glide.

Silvenestri roared, her smaller wings straining against the velocity of the air as she straightened out, scooping air under her, arching her neck to gain wind resistance, copying the greens maneuver and soared above the castle.

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Dumbledore

The shrill screams of the humans plunging through the air was clearly heard above the roaring of the monsters dotting the battle field and

the crack and explosion of spells. Silvenestri's roar resounded close above and all eyes flew to the scene. The dragon's uncontrolled dive transformed into a tightly controlled maneuver enabling her to soar within a few feet of the battlements and as she cleared the tower her wings beat again, carrying her back up into the clouds.

Dumbledore gasped when a quick scan of the area showed the last moments of the Death Eaters plummet from the heights. He sensed magic at work but doubted that they had survived the fall. The shock alone, their instinctive fear of a fall from such a height might have been enough to kill them.

"That had to be a drop of close to a 1000 feet." Dumbledore whispered his attention snapping back to the battle in time to stun a Death Eater. He dared not turn his attention from the fight to scan the sky for signs of the other dragon's and their riders. 'My God, Harry. I did not wish for you at your age to carry the stains of men's blood on your hands or heart. Was there no other way? Did you really have to do that?' he thought dodging another attack with a nimbleness one would expect to find from a teenager.

"I'd say closer to 1500 Albus." Moody growled, a moment's concentration and his magical eye showing him a close up view of the bodies and the depth of the depression they had made on impact. "They can't have been any good at levitation to have left that kind of an impression."

Dumbledore rolled his eyes to glare at Moody who had the grace to blush a little before turning his attention fully to the fight. "Regardless, that had to hurt. Now get a move on with taking out those trolls before we imitate mush." Dumbledore called, noting a group of newly arrived Auror's and directing them into the fray.

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Harry

Harry was quietly congratulating himself on a job well done as they soared through the clouds. The Welsh Green had been freed by the dislodgement of his riders who no doubt had more on their minds than controlling the beast, thereby allowing the rune to lapse. The

male had shown no interest in Hogwarts or the battle after rising into free air and had flown free, great wings beating determinedly away from the fight and castle. Harry had no doubt the Green was on his way home but he spared a moment to admire how the beast had flown to avoid smashing into the ground or the castle.

In fact, though he avoided thinking of it in his public mind for his mount to read, he thought the green had shown far greater skill in the air than Silvenestri. He really needed to get more flying time in. Natural flyers or not dragons needed practice to perfect their skills and that green had brought the lesson home to him. When the battle was done and they had time he and Silvenestri were going flying every chance they could get.

/ One down five to go. / He thought to Silvenestri thumping her shoulder in approval.

/ Yes./ Silvenestri peered into the depths of the cloud, wishing for free air and clear skies. Playing hide and seek with dragons intent on killing her was not her favorite occupation. /There has to be some way of finding.../

For a moment Harry thought they had risen to a height where they were about to escape the cloud cover. The vapor around them acquired a ruddy glow, glistening drops of water shining brighter and brighter and the air was growing warmer.

/The Fireball/ Silvenestri screamed, turning on her wing tip as had proven so effective before and dropping into a dive to avoid the jet of flame that scorched the air where she had been flying moments before. /The Chinese Fireball is right behind us/

Silvenestri rocked on the rise of her wing beat, tucking her tail to avoid a sizzling jet of flame. The other dragon was only a dark shape in the clouds yet he seemed to have no difficulty finding them. Harry thought furiously as Silvenestri used her smaller size and speed over the larger dragon to weave and dodge her way through the jets of flame.

Harry slapped her shoulder to steady her, sensing the rising panic in the dragon. She was barely more than an infant compared to these

beasts and he would not permit any harm to come to her. He reminded her wordlessly that she was not alone and that together they were a match for anything.

/ Descend! Descend and fly close by the southern tower. As you do the fly past make sure you pass the Astronomy tower, to the side of it and slightly higher than the tower itself but not by much. / Harry directed her, drawing his twin-blade and settling himself deeper into the riding straps, checking them for tension and bracing himself.

Silvenestri grunted not quite certain in which exact direction the castle could be found. Tucking her wings she dropped fifty feet in a stomach clenching move, trying to gain some distance from the pursuing dragon and hoping she would not place herself directly in the path of one of the other four beasts she knew were within the clouds. Something that was not dragon fire rocked the air just in front of her and Harry cursed softly, knowing that the Death Eaters riding the Fireball were trying to target her wings and urged her on.

Silvenestri dropped like a stone, angling her descent, wings beating furiously as she sought to gain ground and leave the clouds and dragon behind her. If she could beat the dragon to clear air she would be able to gain her bearings and set herself up to weave between the towers of the castle.

Breaking through the clouds at last she arced, grumbling to herself at discovering she was much further from the castle than she had assumed. As yet the Fireball had not emerged from the clouds but she knew he was close behind her and she wasted no time in setting her direction and settling into position for the fly past.

/ Let them know we are coming/ Harry noted the Fireball erupt from the clouds and arc into a turn to come in line for another try at his mount.

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Tonks

Tonks scanned the skies for any sign of her lover and friend and drew a shaky breath. She needed to trust Harry and she knew he was not

likely to take unnecessary risks but there were so many dragons. They had not thought that the Death Eaters had so many beasts or that they could use rune magic to control them. The battle at the gates of Hogwarts was raging with injuries on both sides though from her perch it looked like the defenders might be gaining at least some slim advantage. That they had not as yet managed to take out all of the Trolls was worrying though.

A roar erupted over the castle and she spun, eyes widening. The familiar thunder of beating dragon wings filled the air, overshadowing the sounds of the battlefield and she looked to see Silvenestri flying directly at her.

“What the hell are you doing Harry?” She yelled backing instinctively to the very edge of the battlements crowning the tower even though she knew the noise destroyed any chance of him being able to hear her.

She caught a glimpse of the beast’s rider, sword in one hand and wand in the other, oncoming at full speed toward her. A spray of red sparks followed by an arc of green sparks lit the area around the oncoming dragon and Tonks saw Harry look back over his shoulder before settling low to Silvenestri’s back.

Tonks understood there was no time to give thought to this. They were obviously in some kind of trouble and she spun, releasing a spray of red sparks down at Hagrid on the south tower and spinning quickly back to keep an eye on events. Harry and Silvenestri were dodging and weaving, avoiding magical attacks being fired at them from the two Death Eaters on the now visible Chinese Fireball and Tonks shuddered at how close the two beasts were getting. Soon Silvenestri would be in range of the Chinese dragon and its fiery breath. Spinning back to the south tower she was relieved to see the red spray answering and she looked back to the oncoming dragons, loosing a green spray of sparks.

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Harry

Harry fervently wished that he could use rune magic while flying. To even try was useless as the runes would become distorted and unstable due to the airflow at such speeds. Magic during in flight combat was limited and could be quite tricky as air flow interfered with your aim, range and the type of magic that could be used. High speed flight effectively cancelled any chance he had of using rune magic against his pursuers.

The spray of green sparks from Tonks was very welcome indeed and he spared a glance over his shoulder at the oncoming beast before settling low to the dragon's neck and locking his legs tight to her hide, trusting the riding straps to keep him secure.

/Straight for the Astronomy Tower, don't spare the horsepower and no matter what keep a straight line./

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Silvenestri

Silvenestri stretched her neck, tightened her muscles into a rigid discipline and dodged the first jet of flame the Fireball aimed at her, pulling herself immediately back onto the course Harry demanded of her. She trusted her rider to know the best means of keeping them both safe and wished herself older and stronger and faster. Much, much faster. She was uncertain how long she could keep up this level of effort without faltering.

She felt the heat of the flames licking at the tip of her tail and surged forward, unwilling to singe her hide and with Tonks firmly in her sights she knew there was aid nearby and she was determined to reach that aid.

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Tonks

Tonks raised her wand as the dragons nose came abreast of the towers far battlement, a flap of straining silver wings and the dragon was past her, a straight arrow holding course and as the silver tail flickered past her she let loose with every charm and curse she could

possibly think of, all aimed at the oncoming Chinese Fireball and his riders.

From the corner of her eye she caught a shimmering flicker of light, a silver blur far too small to be that of a returning Silver dragon even could the beast turn so quickly. It took a precious moment for Tonks to realize that the blur was in fact Harry's double blade on its way toward the oncoming dragon.

A scream, the ragged ear splitting shriek of a dragon in agony rang out over the battlefield. Tonks wanted to avert her eyes from the horror of it, press her hands to her ears to block out the sound but there was no time. The Chinese Fireball was floundering, flapping his great wings in agony to remain aloft, overbalanced by the neatly severed foreleg. Harry's enchanted double blade had sliced cleanly through the dragon's leg. A second scream was lost within the greater scream, the death cry of one of the Death Eaters, dislodged from the Fireballs back by Tonks' magical barrage.

The faltering Fireball thundered past the Astronomy Tower, one wing tip clipping the stone with a shrieking scrape that set Tonks' teeth on edge. The remaining Death Eater was obviously trying to retain some control of the pain enraged beast as they plunged past the tower and he even gained some height as the Death Eater sought to set him on Harry and Silvenestri's trail, still intent on taking out the silver dragon despite the loss of his companion and the severe wounding of his beast.

Tonks leaned over the battlement, intent on the Fireball that now rose though the beast was still bellowing in agony. She saw the Death Eater strike the staining shoulder a hard blow, no encouragement or emotion other than anger in the blow and she cursed him, aiming her wand for him though she doubted she had the range to target him.

A second such blow was halted by the massive impact of a giant sized crossbow bolt. Hagrid stood solidly on the South tower, bushy beard plastered to his chest by the wind of the dragons passing and a look of such anger on his face that Tonks was stunned. The half giant's skill with that massive and unwieldy weapon could not be

doubted as the bolt blasted the Death Eater from the dragon's back to plummet to the ground somewhere beyond the walls of Hogwarts.

She only hoped he had not landed on any of the castles defenders.

The now rider-less Dragon seemed to stall in flight, wings freezing in mid motion and the great head shook fiercely from side to side. He had cleared the South Tower and now roared, head thrown back, long sinuous neck arching before the massive wings finished their down beat, lifting the beast a little in the air. Tonks watched as Hagrid leaned out over the southern towers battlements his attention on the faltering dragon. She could almost hear him willing the beast to escape and for a moment she thought the dragon was going to make it into the higher air and to freedom.

The dragon wheeled around, away from the castle and a great flap of its wings took it over the Forbidden Forest. It dipped low, rear claws brushing the treetops before a second down stroke of its wings tangled a wing tip in the upper branches of a tree and the dragon roared as it went down, vanishing into the dark forest.

Hagrid seemed to lean even further out over the stone of the tower and she knew he had marked the place where the beast had gone down. They would have to find it and see if they could do anything for the dragon. Most likely they would find him dead or barely alive and it would be a mercy to finish the job. No doubt that would upset Hagrid.

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Harry

Harry uttered a quiet word of apology for the dead dragon but he would not chance the safety of Silvenestri by targeting only the Death Eaters and then looked around anxiously. His next opponent was out here somewhere, no doubt lurking within the clouds and waiting for the chance to strike. He needed to devise some plan to deal with the remaining beasts as Silvenestri's reserves would be taxed by this high paced battle. She was far younger than the beasts against which they fought and she would falter from exhaustion before they did.



He didn't get much of a chance to consider battle plans as the clouds erupted with the passage of the remaining Welsh Greens, both attacking at once though from opposing angles. With his heart thumping in terror he dared not think, just act. With two dragons attacking them they well might go down here and now.

"UP!" Harry screamed both with his mind and his voice.

There was no time for more as the mouths of both greens opened. Twin jets of flame spewed from the gaping maws and his mount screamed as she lifted and flared her wings high, clearing the flame stream and thereby retaining the ability to fly. The searing gout of fire hit Silvenestri on her flanks and she continued to bellow with pain but then they were past the greens and on the down stroke they were lifting higher and gaining a few precious minutes.

/Down! Down and fast/

The Greens needed to turn sharply and then gain some flight room before they could circle and come at her again. No doubt the Death Eaters were congratulating themselves on their strategy that had so nearly taken out the only air defense the school had.

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Dumbledore

"HARRY!"

Tonks's scream seemed crystal clear to Dumbledore as it wafted over the battlefield though an Ogre's death scream blended into the sound and took it into anonymity. The Headmaster took a momentary lull in the conflict to look up at the towers crowning the castle. He could just make out a figure on the Astronomy tower leaning over the crenellations and he hoped that with the din of battle and the concentration needed to fight off so many opponents that the defenders were too busy to note one sound amid so many. Light erupted from the East tower and was matched by a green glow from the South tower as one of the Welsh Green's arced around the towers as it began to gain height. Whoever was on the North and

West towers were taking up the barrage firing at the second and slightly larger of the two greens as the dragon arced into a turn.

“Moody did you hear something just now?” Dumbledore queried as he returned his attention to the fight and he fashioned a shield to reflect the spells cast at him by a masked Death Eater. ‘Moody knows but I can’t very well let him or anyone else know that I know who it is fighting on that lovely dragon.’ he thought.

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Moody

“No. I never heard a thing. I see everything but I never hear anything. You should know that by now.” Moody growled.

His magical eye was following the flight of the silver dragon but he was thinking that none of the defenders seemed to have reacted with surprise. Perhaps they had been lucky and none of the others had clearly heard the scream as he had. His magical eye was not the only enhancement he had undergone to aid in his line of work. Multiple hearing charms to proof himself against people sneaking up on him had seemed the natural thing to do after that episode when he had spent almost a year in a trunk. It was not something he wished to chance happening again.

‘Don’t you die Harry Potter or Tonks will bring you back and then kill you again for her trouble. Slow roasting over a fire pit would be along the lines of it. I might even give her suggestions.’

Moody dodged a barrage of spells and Dumbledore responded with a barrage of counter spells then both looked up in the brief respite they earned in time to see that one of the Welsh Green’s was flying free and riderless and two small shapes were plummeting in uncontrolled freefall from the clouds. Moody winced as his magical vision revealed both bodies crimsoned with blood gouged by massive claws.

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Harry

Silvenestri groaned under his knees, a sound more felt through flesh and blood than heard by the human ear.

/ Silvenestri can you continue or do we need to fall back for a time and get you comfortable/ Harry thought through the fog of pain, his own from the burns to his sides that mirrored Silvenestri's wounds and the greater pain of the dragon fed to him through their psychic link.

/ I'm strong and I can still go on... for now at least. Can I go to that sunny beach and sun myself after all of this is over/ Silvenestri thought to him, plaintive wistfulness clear in her tone.

Though she assured him that she was fit to fly he was afraid she was weakening fast. His own pain was lost within hers and that pain would stiffen them both and restrict the speed and nimbleness of the dragon. The simple truth was there were too many foes for them to fight. A one on one battle they had a chance at not only surviving but also winning yet against combined foes they were in trouble.

/ I think I'll join you on that beach in the sun if Tonks lets me out of her sight after this. It would be nice to lie in the sun. Look out/ Harry screamed as the clouds roiled and the massive form of one of the Hungarian Horntails loomed large before them.

Silvenestri tipped her wings, turning from the oncoming dragon and with a downbeat of her wings rose above the spell fired at her from one of the Death Eaters riding the Horntail.

/Down! Go down and run between the north and west towers and as low to the ground as you possibly can. / Harry thought and took precious moments to assert a block to ease the pain from his mount, wishing that he could heal the wounds but such was beyond him. He twisted on the dragons back as she dipped into a dive and hurled his sword in an overhand throw, straining his shoulder muscles as he did so as he put all of the force he could muster into the throw.

Silvenestri went into the turn grunting with the effort. She accomplished the turn with far less grace and speed than she had when she had used so similar a maneuver against the Welsh Green. Exhaustion and the pain of the burns were slowing her down but she

was spry enough to roll over a jet of flame the other Dragon breathed as she flashed past and the spells the Death Eaters were casting at her were neatly dodged then they were past and she knew they had a precious minute before the larger dragon could match their course.

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Tonks

Tonks frowned from her position high over the battlefield, watching as a group of leather clad men joined the defenders at the gates to Hogwarts. To her surprise none of the men, five in all, paid the slightest attention to the ongoing battle except to avoid the conflict and take up position behind the defenders. She leaned over the battlement of the tower and peered at the group but could not make out faces though she thought she caught a flash of vibrant red hair.

‘Charley and the Dragon Tamers?’ She mused. ‘I hope so. Harry needs all the help he can get.’

The thought of Harry set her gaze once more to the sky seeking any sign that Harry and Silvenestri were still up in the skies and sighed with relief when the clouds roiled and the silver dragon exploded from the cloud cover. Her relief quickly turned to anxiety as the clouds immediately behind their passage exploded into a jet of flame a moment later. The silver dragon was in a dive seemingly aimed right for the ground and picking up speed fast.

Harry’s hand was raised as they plummeted toward the ground and the fast approaching castle and a spray of first yellow and then blue sparks erupted from the wand he gripped. Tonks looked immediately to the north and west towers but only the north showed an answering spray of yellow sparks. Afraid that the west tower had been screened by the bulk of the castle from Harry’s alert Tonks fired a barrage of blue light in the direction of the tower and a moment later answering blue sparks came from one of its upper windows.

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Harry

Harry seeing the acknowledging signal fired from the towers settled himself firmly, checking the riding straps had not been weakened by the fiery attacks or by the aerobatics they had been required to perform. He fired off a stunning charm over his shoulder, not really expecting it to have any effect on the pursuing dragon or its riders. It was the principle of the thing and to salve his pride in keeping the Death Eaters from thinking they had this fight going their way.

/ Silvenestri, remember to stay close to the ground. / Harry sent the cautionary thought to his mount as he raised himself a little in the straps to catch his returning sword that had just gotten back. His side flared with pain and he was quick to ease the stretch on scorched flesh. 'Tonks is so going to kill me for all of this.'

Silvenestri edged into a turn, intending to run as close to the castle's wall as possible in her fly past and dropped lower and lower unwilling to spare a seconds attention from the concentration needed to fly safely at such low altitude and proximity to the ancient stone walls. As they're passed the north tower she could almost feel the enemy dragon closing in behind them.

The Hungarian Horntail was closing the distance with powerful sweeps of massive wings but his sheer size forced him to fly a further distance from the castle walls but the great head turned, jaws agape preparatory to unleashing a jet of flame that would bathe the smaller silver dragon and the castle in flame hotter than a blast furnace.

Sprays of green light shaped like arrows flashed from the North Tower, showering the huge dragon and his riders and the air shimmered with magical energy. Curses rained down, most deflected by the Death Eaters.

Silvenestri had streaked past the northern tower, wing tips just clearing the ancient stone of the walls and Harry, with a quick glance back at the oncoming dragon ducked his head and braced himself.

/ Up and around the West Tower and come in behind them/

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Charley

“That looks just about right to give our secret weapon a try out.” Charlie muttered to a companion as he watched the smaller silver dragon leading the Horntail toward the north tower.

“We don’t know how much we will need to take one that big down.”

“Even if it slows the beast down and gives the Silver a chance to escape I will count it a success.” Charley returned and dived for the nearest large bag, hastily reaching for the hidden weapon. “She’s nimble! Quite a neat little flyer.”

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Silvenestri

Silvenestri groaned with the effort of pulling the tight turn and climb that was required to lift her up and over the wall of the castle to enable her to complete the turn and come in behind the larger beast. Wings straining to hold the line of her flight she caught a glimpse of a group of men gathered to one side of the conflict before the castle one of them kneeling and raising some strange device aimed directly at her. There was no time for her to worry that she was to be mistaken for an enemy as her wings caught the updraft and she put all of her strength into the turn, looping around the western tower and coming in over the wall.

Screaming in over the wall and tucking her wings close to her body Silvenestri dropped like a stone, falling toward the rump of the horntail now turning around the tower. She snapped her wings out to slow her descent, shocked that the larger dragon was not already on the far side of the tower and threatening the defenders. Extending her claws before her she determined to rake the beast, perhaps even come in tight enough to skim over him and take out the Death Eaters.

Her claws lodged in the beast’s tail but even as she secured her grip she knew that something was wrong. The dragon was shaking his head and roaring, forelegs clawing at his mouth and the Death Eaters were ignoring her, firing curse after curse at something she could not see. Something within Silvenestri stirred a cold rage and determination gripped her. No doubt the horntail was going to blast the defenders with fire and she could not allow that. She could not do

much damage to the beast but she could do some damage to his riders.

Gripping with her claws she vaulted her bulk over the dragon's back and a cone of frigid air blasted from her maw, taking the nearest Death Eater in the back. The man screamed, a sound heard above the din of combat and the wind of their passage, snuffed out abruptly. The Horntail and the Silver locked to his back soared over the combat zone.

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Harry

Harry gaped at the Death Eater toppling from the dragon's back his face an unnatural blue and frost in his hair. The lead Death Eater was flailing in the air, one arm appeared useless and the larger dragon was in obvious distress. The horntail roared and his flight seemed to be impaired and small though she was in comparison to the greater size of the mature dragon Silvenestri drove her opponent into the ground, releasing her grip at the last moment and climbing with powerful sweeps of her wings.

/You breathed ice, Silvenestri! You breathed ice/

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Dumbledore

Dumbledore glanced around, noting the huddle of Dragon Tamers gathered around Charley Weasley and followed their gaze to watch as the Horntails head come into view. The beast's mouth was gaping wide though none of the Tamers seemed fussed at the impending inferno that would surround them. He could see the flank of the dragon was literally glowing green from the effects of the magical arrows fired from the North tower and as it completed its turn around the western tower he could see the mass of magical arrows dotting its hide.

A strange 'thoomping' sound near at hand drew his attention back to the Tamers but the scream of the Horntail jerked his head back to the

dragon. He watched as Silvenestri dropped from the heights, coming over the castle wall and her reaching forelegs sank claws into the darker hide. It was the strange sound that worried him though for the dragon was screaming, his massive claws raking at his open maw and his head shaking from side to side violently.

As he watched Silvenestri seemed to rear over the Horntail, mouth agape and as they neared the defenders a blast of bitterly cold air washed over the group. Dumbledore shuddered in the frigid air, noting the Dragon Tamers wide eyed stares at the dragons passing overhead and dodging the plummeting body of the Death Eater.

Dumbledore had seen men frozen to death before this day and he blinked in astonishment, aware of the cluster of men around Charley whispering about Ice Breath.

The Dragon tamers had knelt, their only concession to the oncoming dragons, ducking to reduce the shock of the wind caused through the dragons passing and in the wake of that passage they tightened their cluster as the beasts roared overhead. Dumbledore decided that they knew a thing or two about getting out of a dragons way and himself ducked, taking Moody down with him then jumped nimbly to his feet to watch Silvenestri riding the larger beast into the ground. With a surge of muscle and wing she rose just before the Horntail thundered to earth, his rider toppling from his mount and lying still.

“Heard of Ice Breath before, anyone?”

“I’ve never heard of a dragon using anything other than fire.”

“I’ve read that Greater Dragons had varying types of breath weapons. We need to investigate this but not now.”

The voices of the Dragon Tamers drew Dumbledore and Moody to them where they found Charley fitting a red dart into the long and slender shape of a Muggle fire arm. Charley caught the shocked look on both older men’s faces and offered a grin, not in the least repentant.

“It’s called a tranquilizer gun. Only thing is we are not sure about the dosage required to knock out a dragon. That dose bothered the



Horntail though so I'd say maybe three to take it down. Possibly two darts for the smaller greens."

"Muggle weapons." Moody snorted.

"If it makes controlling dragons in a situation such as this feasible don't complain." Dumbledore sighed. "We have never before had to face dragons in such circumstances."

"Exactly." Charley returned, scanning the sky for any sign of another dragon. "Tom, you better check the Horntail. If he's alive jab him under the front foreleg, in the joint to the body to get through his hide. Those arrows may have opened a wound to make it easier." Charley handed a hypodermic needle to one of the tamers. "That should keep him quiet. Someone go and check that Death Eater is out of the picture!"

Dumbledore turned to watch the disappearing form of the Silver dragon. "I must say that little dragon has some useful skills." 'As does her rider. Nice job, Harry.'

Moody nodded scratched an itch and fired a charm at an oncoming Death Eater, glancing at the downed bulk of the dragon that seemed to be twitching. "I must say I agree with you Albus."

"I wouldn't mind getting a closer look at the dragon. From the burns on her flanks she is going to require some specialist attention or the muscles, ligaments and tendons controlling her wings will pull as they heal, reducing her ability to fly." Charley commented, eyeing the dragon as she vanished into the cloud cover.

Moody just nodded and eyed the Muggle weapon as though he expected it to blow up in his face.

"One of the Welsh Greens has gone, presumably back to Wales where it belongs, but we can investigate that later. There is a Chinese Fireball wounded, possibly dead in the Forbidden Forest and the Horntail is, I presume, out of the battle?" Dumbledore commented. "They were fighting another green a while ago but I am not sure what happened to it."

“Do you know how many dragons there are?”

“There were three Welsh Greens, the Chinese fireball, and two Hungarian Horntails.” Moody muttered, his eyes scanning the cloud cover once again. “That little dragon is certainly becoming slower and she seems to be having trouble turning.”

“Incoming Dragons!” The shout rose from the far side of the battlefield and drew the instant attention of the Dragon Tamers.

Dumbledore, Moody and Charley were all standing back from the fight and were quick to gain a position where they could survey the oncoming dragons. Silvenestri burst from the cloud cover, arrow straight for the huge bulk of the remaining Hungarian Horntail that was descending in an attack sweep toward the battling forces at the gates of the school. The two Welsh Greens were suddenly there engaging the towers, one at the east tower and the second coming in at the North tower.

“If that Horntail keeps to that course and the Silver can distract it from breathing fire I might be able to get in a shot at its mouth. Dragon hide is too thick for this gun to penetrate but there are some vulnerable points. The Horntail’s the greater threat at the moment.” Charley decided.

“You have more of those Muggle things?” Moody queried.

“No. This is the first time we have tried using tranquilizer guns on Dragons. Besides I am the only one who knows how to use it.”

“Reinforcements.” Dumbledore noted the stir in the battle ranks, guessing that his summons for aid was being answered. However if they could not turn the Horntail from firing on the battlefield many of those now helping defend Hogwarts would be badly injured, if not slain outright in the fiery onslaught.

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Tonks

Tonks tried her best to keep her hands steady as she fired spells at the Welsh Green flying past the Astronomy tower, circling the northern tower and returning again and again to circle her position. It seemed with each circle of the towers the beast came closer and a roar trembled the stones under her feet.

The second green was roaring, using its sheer size and the thunder of its voice to terrify the defenders. The green was blasting flame at the towers as it passed though to date it seemed not to have caused any injuries to the defenders. The barrage of spells seemed effective at driving it out of killing range but she knew that they could not last forever.

Taking a moment's respite she leaned over the battlement and surveyed the field. The red head she presumed was Charley Weasley was kneeling that strange shape in his hand aimed at the oncoming Horntail and she saw him jerk as the beast opened its mouth to breath fire. A moment later the horntail roared and overshot the battlefield, Silvenestri hard on its tail, straining to catch the beast though what she thought she could do to stop it Tonks had no idea.

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Charley

He straightened as the dragons passed overhead, straining to detect any faltering in the horntails flight and loading a new dart into the chamber as he did so. Dumbledore and Moody were defending him, the other dragon tamers having gone to the north and east towers intent on using more traditional methods to aid the defenders under siege.

"Well?" Moody growled.

The Horntail arced into a wide turn, Silvenestri having to back off a little or turn ahead of the slower beast and he nodded slowly, noting the faintest hesitation in the flight of the big dragon.

"If I can get a second into him it would be better." He muttered when a roar overhead drew his attention.

One of the Welsh Greens had attempted to land on the Astronomy tower but missed its footing and plummeted before stabilizing itself and climbing back out of the castles maze of wings and towers. He noted that while there were arcs of green arrows coming from the other four towers there was nothing coming from the Astronomy tower.

"I have to go! I think that Horntail will slow and it has to come around the school in range of whatever those arrows are. Whoever is on that tower is in trouble."

Dumbledore followed his gaze and cursed softly, reaching out to halt Charley and pressing a ring into his hand.

"This will take you into a cupboard in the Room of Requirement. Be quick."

Confused he stared at the old wizard for a moment and shrugged, concentrating on the ring and the world went dark around him and the familiar pull of magical displacement closed over him.

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Tonks

The Welsh Green was getting closer with each sweep. She spared a moment to search the skies for Harry but could see nothing and she assumed they were either within the clouds again or behind one of the towers or possibly lower and close to a wall. With a soft hiss of breath she turned to the oncoming Green and fired a curse as a massive down stroke of the beasts wings lifted the Death Eater riders into view for a moment. The lead rider screamed and toppled from the beast but then the dragon was rearing back, forelegs extended and claws spread.

With a shriek Tonks dived for the nearby door hoping to gain cover as the dragon came in for a landing, wrapping its massive tail around the tower. She turned in the doorway to see the great green shoulder filling her view and hear the maniacal laughter of the rider and seeing red she fired a charm blindly up at the massive beast. Claws

scrabbled on the stone and the beast slipped as the charm was released and the Death Eater choked and slipped to the tower floor.

The dragon roared, rearing back, bellowing repeatedly and Tonks heard the creak of protesting stone. A part of the crenellations broke away and with it the dragon lost its tenuous hold on the tower and toppled over the side, the Death Eater dragged down it. The furiously scrabbling claws shook the tower and Tonks fell to the floor, hitting her head on the floor and the world wavered between light and dark.

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Harry

Silvenestri was failing fast but would not consider backing off from the horntail. Harry had noted Charley kneeling amid the battlefield and unlike most others present he recognized the weapon in the Dragon Tamers hands. Confident that he was not fighting the beast alone he did not insist that Silvenestri back away from the fight.

He could see that the Green's were receiving heavy fire as they circled the towers and the Horntail seemed to be faltering in his flight pattern but he was not landing and the Death Eaters riding him were turning the beast back toward the battle field.

A blast of fire from one of the Green's rocked the North Tower but a hail of green arrows responded and Harry knew all was well there. He turned his attention to the Horntail and urged Silvenestri to one more effort. With just a few more beats of her wings they would be in position.

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Tonks

The world seemed to be baking with heat and roaring with continuous thunder and there was brilliant light near her. The cool breeze that wafted over her assisted in her recovery and she became aware that she was lying on warm stone and that there was a roar that was bestial, not that of natures fury. Pulling herself to her feet she realized that she was in the alcove of the Astronomy tower and that Charley

Weasley was kneeling in front of her and the Welsh Green was teetering on the brink of the tower yet again.

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Charley

Charley had found himself in a dark small cupboard but on finding the door he had fallen from the cupboard and found himself in a massive room full of plain furniture. There were piles of school desks, cupboards, side boards and chests but he gave no thought to his surroundings. Dumbledore had revealed a secret of the school to him and he would marvel at it later. For now he needed to find his way out of this room and up to the Astronomy tower. Finding the door proved easy though he found himself in an unfamiliar corridor with a door at the far end.

With a small sigh he sprinted for the door, every sense he had telling him that he had to hurry. He burst through the door and into another hallway, this one he recognized and with a feral grin he was off and running determined to reach the tower before the dragon could do any more damage than had already been done. This tower alone had not released the magic enhanced green arrows and he feared that whoever had been on it had fallen to the Green.

He used every shortcut he had ever learned during his time as a student at Hogwarts to shorten the journey and breathed a sigh of relief as he charged up the last of the steps. Lungs heaving for breath he hurdled over the crumpled figure in the alcove at the head of the steps and slid to a halt in the doorway.

The Welsh Green, riderless and enraged seemed intent on tearing the tower apart, stone by stone. Lifting the rifle to his shoulder he aimed carefully, hoping to gain a shot and his opportunity came as the beast noted his presence, opening its maw to hiss and roar at him in rage. He knew this rage, the unthinking berserk rage of a dragon in pain and he did not hesitate to take the shot.

The green roared at the sting of the dart lodging in the fleshy throat, rearing back and shaking its head as its forepaws released their hold

on the tower. The beast dropped over the side of the tower and Charley turned at the sound of movement behind him.

“Hi, Tonks.” He greeted and reached to steady her. “You okay?” ‘I wouldn’t have thought she would be up here alone. I thought she was down on the ground somewhere and I just hadn’t seen her.’

“Fine. Just fine. How many left?”

Charley turned from her, making his way to the crumbled battlements and surveying the area carefully. The second Green was netted, three of the Dragon Tamers securing the stakes and slipping chains on the beast. The dragon he had shot was airborne still but its flight was faltering and he was quick to load another tranquilizer dart into the rifle.

Quickly he scanned the skies for the Horntail and grunted softly. “The green and the Horntail but it looks like the dart I shot into him is having some effect. It won’t take him down but it will make him groggy and stupid if we are lucky... well, if the rider on the Silver is lucky.”

“Where is...?”

Charley smiled and nodded toward the south wall. “Over there. Down!”

Tonks dropped as Charley raised the rifle once again and the Green, hissing in fury opened its maw to breathe flame.

“Time for a nap, big fellow.” Charley murmured, took the shot and dived taking Tonks back into the alcove as the dragon flipped into a turn, the massive long tail whipping out to sweep the tower and shake the walls.

“That should take him down within a couple of minutes.” He said conversationally as he helped her to her feet.

A deafening roar, the scream of a mature large dragon shook the stones they stood on and Charley grunted softly.

“The Horntail.”

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Harry

Harry's smile was broad as he and Silvenestri went straight at the last Hungarian Horntail. His double bladed sword was in his hand and pulled back ready for the throw at just the right opportunity. Silvenestri strained forward, her head angled and drawing in breath preparatory to using her paralyzing breath weapon when within range of the Death Eaters riding the Horntail.

‘Silvenestri has her Ice Breath but she can only use that once in a day. We need to get close enough for her to hit the Death Eaters and we will only have one shot at it.’

The Horntail however had other ideas as primal instinct drove him to incline left and drop into a dive and the Death Eaters ducked low to the beast's neck. The Silver's breath weapon missed her target by mere inches however it was not a clean escape for the larger dragon's riders. At the last instant Harry had thrown his sword and the dragons dip while saving the beast itself from the flashing blade placed the Death Eaters riding him directly into the path of the blade.

The rear rider screamed at the sword took him through the shoulder and knocked him from the wheeling dragon's back, his flailing arm dislodging the forward rider from his precarious perch. With scrambling hands reaching for the harness and curses at his companion the Death Eater managed to retain his seat and slid his legs back under the riding straps.

Harry hissed in rage, his hope of taking out the larger dragon quickly and cleanly fading with the disaster. Silvenestri was faltering, exhausted and wounded. He needed to tend to his mounts injuries but there was no hope of avoiding this battle. The one factor in his favor was that the Welsh Greens seemed not to be interested in pursuing the Silver.

The Silver and the Horntail began to circle each other, the silver careful to remain out of the reach of the bigger dragon. Harry and the



Death Eater glared at each other as their beasts circled, each with wand in hand and ready at the first opportunity to present itself to try taking the other down.

/A Green is down at the castle. I can't see the other. / Silvenestri reported.

/ Good enough. We can only hope that they can handle the greens. This one seems sluggish but he's an older dragon and used to fighting in the air. I think... Yes, that might work. It's risky but we are far more nimble than the Horntail and I don't think the Death Eater has full control of the dragon. If they fight each other it may be possible for us to pull this off. When I give you the signal I want you to dive. Don't pull up until I say so. /

Silvenestri grunted acknowledgement, too tired now to do more than gather her flagging strength and continue to circle the enemy dragon, waiting for the other to open a hole in his defense. Harry gripped his wand tighter and calmed himself, preparing every counter curse he could think of.

/ Now/

Silvenestri tucked her wings and dropped into the dive with a roar of challenge and the Horntail answered that challenge, screaming in protest to the Death Eaters counter commands, trying to force him to level flight again.

Harry felt his heart thudding in his chest as the ground rushed up toward them and listened to the scream of the Horntail. He glanced over his shoulder to see the beast was right on her tail and he grinned in challenge at the Death Eater, trying to distract him from controlling the dragon's flight. He lifted his returned blade in the air in challenge and the Death Eater raised his wand, forgetting all about the need to bring the dragon under control and Harry was quick to respond with counter curses, his goal accomplished.

Over the thunder of the wind and dragon wings Harry could hear the roaring of the bigger dragon and he could feel the growing magical emanations as the Death Eater stepped up his magical barrage but through it all the little silver dragon didn't falter. With all of the speed

she could muster and with her heart thundering in her chest Silvenestri continued to dive toward the onrushing ground.

/He's the Seeker, Silvenestri and we are the Golden Snitch. / He sent to her. /Lets show him how poor a Seeker he is. /

This was their last gambit, Harry knew. There was a great heart within the dragon's breast but she was young and she was hurt and her reserves were failing. He would have to get her away from the combat if this failed. His own pain was rising in crushing waves and he knew they were finished.

"NOW!" He yelled, thumping a fist against her shoulder.

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Tonks

"The Green's going down." Charley commented, moving cautiously around the tower.

Tonks moved closer to the edge of the broken section, careful of her footing as she searched the sky for the battling dragons. Her eyes widened as she saw the plummeting forms and she pressed her hands to her mouth to contain the scream.

It looked like the leading dragon was going to plow into the ground with the bulkier dragon right behind her. Closer and closer to the ground they fell, the horntail roaring in rage as they dived.

"Pull up." Tonks whispered. "Pull up Silvenestri. Pull up."

When it seemed impossible for the dragon to break from the dive Silvenestri's wings flared and she extended her front feet. Charley sucked in a deep breath at that and Tonks dared not take her eyes from the scene. The silver neck extended to its full length and great muscles strained against the momentum of the dive. At the moment when Tonks was certain they could not pull out of the dive the great body lifted and tucked rear legs extended, silver claws seemed to dig into the ground, knees bending and with a massive down sweep of the wide wings the dragon seemed to claw her way into the air.

“She’ll break her legs trying that!” Charley hissed.

The movement was more of a jump than anything but her wings failed to gather sufficient lift to clear her from the ground and she tried once again, this time slowing enough to enter a semi controlled slide. Dirt sprayed into the air, covering the Horntail on her tail and obscuring his sight and with a last spring that drew a scream from the Silver Silvenestri managed to throw herself sideways and come to an abrupt stop.

With a mighty roar of rage and dawning pain the larger dragon, enveloped in the dirt and dust spraying in the air from Silvenestri’s slide lost sight of the ground and his prey. The ground beneath the observers shook as the massive bulk of the dragon impacted and the debris thrown up obscured their view of the crash but there was no mistaking that sickening crack of breaking bones.

“Neck broke, I’d say.” Charley quietly commented. “Bastards forced them into combat like this and can’t even keep them safe.”

Tonks glared at him but Charley shook his head. “They never asked to be here. I saw the rune on them. I know what it means. Not the dragons fault, so don’t blame them.”

Chastised Tonks nodded slowly and turned away from the view on seeing the silver dragon stir. “There’s still the rider to be dealt with.”

“He won’t have survived the impact and there are Aurors enough down there to deal with it.”

Tonks hesitated a moment, just long enough to note that the remaining Death Eaters and their cohorts were fleeing the battlefield. It was over.

“Thank god.” She whispered. “I’m going down.”

She nodded briefly to Charley and hurried to the stairs. Harry was down there and while she had seen Silvenestri move after that dreadful landing she had not seen Harry. She needed to know that he was alright.

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# Charley

Charley watched Tonks run from the tower and tackle the stairs before turning back to survey the battlefield. The drugged Welsh Green was on the ground now and two of his team were hurrying to chain the beast. They were uncertain how long the drug would contain it and he wanted to be certain they had the dragon safely confined before there was any danger of having him aware enough to cause trouble. The second beast was chained and contained by the net which left the Chinese Fireball he had been told about to locate.

“I’ll probably have to put that one down if he survived.” He whispered. “I hope not but I can’t have a wounded dragon loose.” His eyes rested on the stirring Silver dragon. “Then there is you, missy. I need to get close enough to you to see how badly you are hurt.”

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Dumbledore.

'It's over. Just the cleanup... and damage control, of course.'

The headmaster sighed softly, leaning against the wall and considering the bodies strewn about the battlefield. The dust had yet to settle enough to permit them to approach the downed dragon and he desperately wanted to know that Harry and the little girl had survived the dive.

[illegible]

## Thanks to the following reviews

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## Chapter 20: Truth is a Dangerous Thing.

/ Telepathic /

12 February 1997 16:11 PM A.D

Dumbledore with Moody and Kingley looked about the body strewn battle field. After a moment the three began to pick their way through the carnage toward the edge of the area and the dirt covered form of the silver dragon. Her colour was harder to see under the coating of settling dirt but they could hear her pained breaths even from this distance. Her rider tumbled from her back and Dumbledore picked up his pace, intent on reaching dragon and rider as quickly as possible. As he watched Harry, still shrouded in his magic, stumbled to his feet and despite his left arm hanging limp at his side he was trying to attend to the needs of his dragon.

From what he could see as he approached the young man's arm and side looked to be near useless. Under the dirt and blood the burns looked severe and he stumbled to his knees, head hanging. Dumbledore knew the adrenaline rush of battle had passed and with it the pain would now be rising both for him and for Silvenestri.

"Well, Nameless wasn't it...? You're looking a little worse for wear this afternoon." Dumbledore picked his way around a scattering of bodies, his wand raised and eyes darting about the area. There was no guarantee as yet that the enemy was dead and he wanted to be ready if there were any nasty surprises lurking in the area.

'My word, that has to hurt Harry.' He thought seeing the burns up close on the side of Harry's face and the tattered left sleeve showed how badly the dragon and her rider had been scored in the battle.

"Oh, I'm fine considering. Just the odd major burn, a little jinx and some other spell damage... Nothing major. You?" Harry staggered to his feet keeping his face hidden from the three men as he was uncertain how effective the disguise spells might be in his weakened condition.

He just wished they would go away and leave him to heal his dragon. He at least needed to clean her wounds and try to ease her pain as

best he could but for him to work freely he needed to gather his control and dismiss his own pain. If they would just go away he could surely manage that. 'Go away I am trying to treat the wounds of my friend here.'

The world blurred in his vision but he staved off the wavering. He could not weaken until he took care of Silvenestri.

"Ah well, I had a lovely afternoon. Quite lively actually. A little bit of practice with a variety of shields and practicing the casting of a few powerful charms of various sundry assorted natures." Albus paused and considered Harry for a moment before taking a half step forward.

Silvenestri groaned a deep rumbling sound and moved her head, resting it so that she blocked Harry from Dumbledore and the other two men with him.

"I think Mr. Shacklebolt here would like to talk to you. Something about the night of August 9th and where you were that night." Dumbledore continued, unphased by the Dragon's movement.

He edged a little to one side so that he could continue to see Harry and after a moment's consideration he raised his wand so that with a flick of his wrist he could bring the wand to bear on Harry. He made no threatening movement being more concerned with getting off a quick spell to spare Harry additional injury if it looked as though he would fall on that injured side

'I don't like the looks of those wounds, Harry my boy. You need some attention but you will not cooperate until we deal with the dragon, will you? Now let me see, how do we heal so large a beastie, hmm? Handling her will be awkward if she gets a little tetchy. I think Charlie and the Dragon Handlers will be our best bet. If he lands on that side with those burns and the added weight of that armor he could really do some damage to himself. A levitation charm should keep him from a nasty fall.'

"You can put that away Dumbledore. I'm done. I can't even help my friend here... or at least not properly." Harry sighed and wavered.

With his head bowed from the pain he dropped to his knees and Silvenestri brought her head around all the way with a distressed growl. Her teeth drew back into a threatening snarl as Albus fired off a quick spell, flipping the wand toward Harry. The dragon quieted when Harry's fall to the ground halted, the levitation charm sparing him further injury.

Dumbledore nodded slightly in satisfaction and lowered his wand. With a pleasant smile on his face he turned to nod to Kingley who was eyeing the dragon warily. Silvenestri was protecting her rider much like a mother hen protected her chicks and Kingley seemed most uncertain of approaching closer. Dumbledore looked back to the dragon and met the gleaming jewel like eyes and winked quite cheekily. He knew who Nameless was and he permitted the dragon to know he was not here to harm her rider.

"Very well, if you intend to cooperate there is no need for violence. I can see that you are in pain so I'll..."

Kingley was cut off as Tonks ran by him and launched herself fearlessly over the dragon's snout. She hugged Harry, muttering to him softly but fiercely about doing something so stupid and how he was not going to be leaving her sight ever again as she could not trust him not to hurt himself. Through the low voiced but fierce tirade Silvenestri tilted her head and watched with quiet amusement but when Moody took a step forward she bared her teeth once again and angled her head toward him in clear warning.

"SHIT! Tonks don't do that! Not now!" Harry yelled as Tonks set about investigating his burns and her hands scraped over a hidden injury. He threw his head back in reaction to the rise in pain and the spell shielding him collapsed.

'Oops.' Dumbledore winced.

"Harry!" Kingley shouted and Dumbledore was quick to mirror that stunned exclamation, his own shout loosed before Kingley's shout stilled in the air. Dumbledore knew that they could not hide this but he need not allow anyone to know that he had known the truth of it for some time. It was better to keep the Ministry guessing.

Moody grunted, a noncommittal sound containing many inflections and when Harry straightened he caught the young man's eyes and smiled. Moody looked at Dumbledore and gave him a quick wink to confirm that he had known who Nameless was. His knowledge of the identity of Nameless was thanks to his magical eye and a few potions he took every now and then. Moody was very careful about what charms could be used against him since he had spent the better part of a year hidden in a trunk. One of those precautions made it very difficult for his memory to be messed with.

"Sorry, sorry, sorry." Tonks was chanting, fussing as she tried to peel the armor off. In despair she performed a quick healing charm on his wounds. It was a low level Healing charm but it was the best that she knew and at least it would help to ease the pain until she could get Harry to Rowena's rooms for some proper treatment.

Dumbledore after giving himself all of three seconds to get over the mock shock of discovering the identity of Nameless cast a shielding ward so that no one could listen in on the conversation about to take place. He hoped Kingley would cooperate and not delay them too much. He wanted Harry attended to with all speed and to do that he knew they needed to get the dragon somewhere safe to tend to her wounds.

"Now Mr. Potter, perhaps you can give us one good reason why I should keep you in school after cutting off my arm at Christmas?"

Kingley gaped looking rather like a goldfish out of water. Dumbledore ignored him for the moment taking the time to study the hulking form of the dragon who was making odd wuffling sounds he suspected were related to the nasty spread of burns she carried. Her flanks were beginning to bellows with the pained pants she was making and he thought under all the dirt her colour was shifting to grey more than silver. 'Yes, my dear. As quickly as we can but I need to deal with Kingley. I must say it is nice to finally see you in your true form and a fine looking dragon you are too.'

Harry gave a harsh barking chuckle. "I did ask nicely first and you were...stubborn... The Dragon Lord side takes insult... very easily. Sorry... If that is not good enough... an apology... how does... does



finding new allies... with... another race sound?" He luxuriated in not having to hold himself up. The levitation charm supported him and made it easier for Tonks to work his cloak off and then move on to the poltroon sleeve of the armour on his burnt side.

Dumbledore nodded with his best smile lighting his face "Good enough for me. Kingley." The Professor turned to the Auror. "I believe you are still searching for someone who broke into the Ministry and destroyed a very rare and rather powerful magical gate?"

The Auror was silent and turning to him Dumbledore noted he was watching Tonks with a raised eyebrow. She was absorbed in relieving Harry of his armor and firing off a pain relieving Healing charm with every piece of the armor she removed.

'It's a nice picture isn't it Kingley?' He nudged the man with an elbow hoping the man would be sensible enough not to comment on how Tonks was looking at Harry. You could not mistake that look that screamed Lover, not just friend. 'I must say I believe that Harry may need her in this time of war more then we will need her.'

The often somewhat clumsy young woman was now intently focused on Harry's needs and there was nothing clumsy about her actions. The gentleness in her hands as she loosened the buckles and straps of the armor would be far gentler than that of most medic witches would be when dealing with a patient when they had a battlefield triage to deal with.

At Dumbledore's repeated nudge Kingley grunted softly momentarily confused. He glanced around at the people attending the wounded and nodded after being giving a friendly tap on the shoulder by Moody. He walked up to Harry, sliding carefully around the great head of the dragon and crouched down in front of him. He was all too aware of the dragon's eyes tracking his every movement.

"Gate. Yes, quite. Now Harry since at the moment I appear to be the ranking Ministry official in the region I must ask this question. Why did you attack the Ministry on the night of August 9th and destroy an old and valuable artefact from the time of Merlin?" He said eyes fixed warily on the silver dragon.

“Well for one thing the gate actually predates Merlin’s time and there is the small matter that it was not me who destroyed it. That was Silvenestri.” At Kingley’s blank look Harry sighed but smiled.

Tonks ignored Kingley sitting next to her as she continued to divest Harry of the sections of his armor and ease his pain as best she could. She could have treated the wounds so much more effectively if she had done better in the healing class she had taken as part of her Auror training. Lightly she rested one hand on his good shoulder in a caress that was meant to be an offer of support and a gesture of love. It was an action that everyone recognized as a lovers reassurance.

“And where, might I enquire, is this Silvenestri now?” Kingley asked and dragged his gaze off the dragon to glower in what was his best Ministry glower at Harry.

He could all too easily see the pain Harry was feeling and knew that despite the work Tonks had done the pain was not easing.

‘You, my dear Tonks need to read some Medical Tomes if he is going to keep doing this sort of thing to himself.’ He thought and covered the small laugh with a cough. He had to deal with this so they could get Harry inside... but what were they going to do with the dragon?

Harry coughed a smirk widening into a grin before he met Kingley’s eyes. “Look above you.” A ragged whisper and when Tonks pulled at his shirt trying to separate it from burned flesh his eyes rolled back in his head and he passed out on Tonks shoulder. Tonks gasped a sorry and caught him before he slipped off her shoulder, forgetting the levitation charm would stop him from slamming to the ground, her arms gently holding as another strap parted and a piece of armor fell off.

Kingley turned in the direction Harry had indicated and found himself eyeball to nostril with the dragon.

Kingley found the jewel like eyes of the dragon on him and he could read the look reflected there. Her rider was now unconscious and she was in pain herself but she would protect Harry and his mate if anyone tried to take them any.

“Good afternoon, Silvenestri.” Kingley nodded his head briefly to the dragon, swallowed and looked to Dumbledore and Moody. “Well then, I’d say this case might as well be filed under the unsolved cases, don’t you agree Dumbledore? Moody?”

Dumbledore nodded agreement and looked around the battlefield. On noticing Charlie with Ron and Ginny approaching, Ron cautiously eyeing the hulking form of the dragon he lowered the shield to permit them to approach closer. Ginny, with a small cry immediately raced to help Tonks with Harry. Ron gulped on getting a clear view of the dragon towering over the group and determined to help his brother secure this dragon that he was sure must be the beast they had been trying to catch for much of the year.

Dumbledore hesitated wondering how they were going to get Silvenestri to permit anyone other than her rider to attend to her wounds and with Harry unconscious that was likely to be very difficult indeed. Perhaps if Harry had told her to trust them before he had fainted it might have been alright but Charlie moved past the cluster of Professors and bowed to Silvenestri stepping closer to her and pulling from his pocket a small clay pot.

The dragons head dipped, her attention focused on the leather clad human she knew Harry had feared might find her and she trembled both from weakness and the pain flaring in her side. He bowed to her and showed no sign of wishing to attack her and her sensitive nostrils detected the strong herbal smell from the small pot.

“There now, Gracious One. I only wish to help. Those wounds need to be treated and I know you would prefer your Rider but he is in need of help himself. Might this poor substitute tend to your wounds?”

He spoke on a sub vocal level. The humans so close to her would not have heard him as he approached but her sensitive hearing enabled her to hear him clearly enough and with a quick look to see that Harry was still unconscious she dipped her head. His hands moved immediately to her foreleg and at that first touch Silvenestri sighed. These were hands that knew what they were doing and she settled to his touch.

'My God, these wounds are even worse than I thought they might be. Looks like Harry made a start on the worst of them... some form of magical healing I think but he's out of the picture now so we need to deal with these the old fashioned way... or should that be the modern way?'

He lightly ran a hand over the raw wound tracing the line of the burn over the long leg and to the knee joint, investigating the tendons and the joint for damage after that less than graceful landing.

"Gently now, girl. We need to test your legs to see if we can walk you out of here." He spoke in a low soothing voice. Later he would allow the wonder of handling a dragon without the aid of magic or powerful tranquilizing herbs. Later when he had the dragon comfortable would be soon enough for that.

Silvenestri sighed in relief as a piece of stone lodged near the joint of her knee was carefully picked out and then the human dabbed some of the cream in the pot on the wound and a blessed numbness began to take away the pain from the joint. More confident now she settled lower, resting her head beside the human attending to her and let Charlie work. She was more concerned now with keeping an eye on Harry who remained stubbornly unconscious despite the best efforts of both Ginny and Tonks to wake him up.

Professor Moody had acquired a stretcher and was now maneuvering it close to Harry and motioning to Ron to stop gawking at his brother's actions and give him a hand to move Harry to the device. Looking as though he was in shock Ron moved rather like a robot to join Moody. He stared at Harry encased still in half the suit of armor and at the raw wounds down his side but took Harry's feet and the levitation charm enabled them to move Harry to the stretcher without further damage being done.

Ginny was scowling at him and Tonks moved past him to continue attending to Harry. Ginny, his baby sister imperiously waved him aside and took the other side of the stretcher, picking gently at where the undershirt of the armor was burned to the raw flesh.

"We need to get him inside, Ginny. It's no good doing this out here. We will only get dirt in the wounds we uncover."

Ron sidled over toward Charlie but halted a very respectful distance from the jewel eyes that came to rest on him. Charlie seemed absorbed in what he was doing and whatever that was the dragon seemed to appreciate it. She had even moved her head so that he could stand just above her nostrils and stretch his long frame along her snout between her eye ridges enabling him to look at a wound normally out of his reach near her eye.

"Charlie what are you doing?" he gasped, horrified. One flick of her head and his brother could be dragon snack. "That's not... That's a dragon, Charlie, not a... a... horse." He ended rather lamely.

Charlie chuckled. "Well, Ronald, I would never have guessed. Thanks for the enlightenment."

Ron's eyes bugged at being called Ronald, which only ever happened if he was in deep trouble and usually it was only his mother or occasionally his father who called him by his full name even then. "Charlie! We've been trying to catch this dragon for months now."

Charlie paused in the task of dabbing some of the ointment from the little clay pot on the burn he was attending and glanced down at Ron. "Have we? I don't think so. We were after a wild dragon, Ron." He winked. "Not this lovely young lady."

Ron gaped anew.

"Ron, it's okay. If you had been out here to see this lovely lady take on five mature dragons and win you would also be helping me ease her pain, not standing there glaring at me. Now stop glaring at Ginny too. She's old enough to make her own decision about choosing which side in this war she is going to be fighting with."

Charlie slid carefully down the dragon's snout, eased himself to the side over her right nostril and jumped to the ground. He studied his handiwork and sighed, shaking his head slightly. "That's an awful lot of dragon to be healed. Shut up and stop imitating a goldfish, Ron and help me with our friend here." Charlie moved to her right flank and rested a hand above the raw wound on her flank, pulling out his wand. "We need something a little stronger than the ointment I think to deal with this. Have to clean it out before we can do anything." He

swished the wand in a practiced flick and Silvenestri reared back, crying out in pain but Charlie stood his ground and rested a hand lightly on her under side. "Easy, Young One. It will pass. We have to clean out the wounds before we can do anything."

"Ginny do you know where Hermione and the others are?" Tonks glanced at Ginny before enacting a levitation spell on the stretcher, lifting it from the ground and preparing to take him to Rowena's rooms. 'Damn you Harry, next time I'm going up with you into battle so I can keep you out of trouble.' She thought and began to walk away, the stretcher gliding smoothly along under her control.

"WHAT! Hermione's apart of your group too?" Ron shouted.

The dragon roared when she saw Tonks walking away and came down to all four legs and limped a step before collapsing from the pain. Charlie moved to her head quickly, stroking her eye ridges gently and soothing her and Tonks hesitated, looking from the dragon to the stretcher.

"Charlie... I need to get Harry inside. Can you take care of Silvenestri..."

Again the dragon bellowed and stumbled forward and Tonks sighed. She stepped closer to the dragon, aware of the eyes of the Professors on her and the way the clean up had halted as people reacted to the upset dragon in their midst.

"Can you change? Silvenestri can you shape change? At least long enough to get you both inside?"

The dragon wavered a moment, shuddering and crooned in pain but her eyes never left the stretcher and after a moment a small child lay in the dirt, her body charred and sobbing from the pain. Slowly Charlie bent down and very gently lifted her into his embrace. With a low sob Silvenestri rested her head on his shoulder and allowed herself to be carried toward the castle.

'She is far tamer than I expected after watching that fight.' Charlie mused stepping closer to the stretcher so that Silvenestri could see

that Harry was breathing. 'Still, some of that docility could be because she is just too tired and afraid for Harry to fight with me.'

Silvenestri raised her head and stared at Charlie for a long moment and then looked down at Harry. She would have to place her trust in the human she did not know but he had helped her so far and even though it did hurt she knew as he had worked on her that he was helping and the pain could not be avoided. She looked down at Harry aware that the human carrying her was talking to Professor Dumbledore and for the briefest of moments she found herself staring into Harry's green eyes. It was only for a bare second but in that moment, un witnessed by anyone else they exchanged glances and Harry's eyes closed once again.

"Yes Ron, Hermione is apart of this group and has been from the start of the year. Will you please keep your eyeballs in their sockets and stop imitating a gold fish." Ginny turned from Ron to Tonks. "We have all gathered at Rowena's rooms. The others are already dealing with injuries taken during the fight." Ginny sighed and glanced at Charlie who was gently stroking the little girl's silver hair. 'You better look after her Charlie or Harry will kill you. You are taking this far better than I thought you would... and I don't understand why she trusts you so readily.'

"Who else out of my friends are members of this group?" Ron demanded following after Tonks as she directed the stretcher off the battlefield and into Hogwarts grounds. He glared at Harry upset that so much had been going on and he had been oblivious to it.

"Tonks and Hermione are in joint command positions, my seconds." Harry murmured, forcing his eyes open. "Professor McGonagall and Hagrid have the third command positions and Ginny is the newest member of the new Dragon Host."

Harry focused his gaze with difficulty on the small bloodied and burned figure wrapped in Charlie's arms. When he tried to move his head pain lanced through him, stilling any thoughts of movement. / Damn that is so going to leave a scar. / He thought. / Tonks will have to get use to it but I'm sure she won't mind. /

Silvenestri raised her head slightly from the broad shoulder that really felt rather comfortable to her aching body and gave a little giggle at the private comment from Harry and then lowered her head back onto Charlie's shoulder letting her eyes half close.

/ Don't you laugh, Little Missy. Now behave yourself with Charlie and let him deal with any wounds. He knows his work and I... I think we can trust him. He'll at least be able to make you comfortable and I'll finish the rest of the healing after I'm allowed to move again. /

Silvenestri gave another little giggle at the comment from her wing mate. She was enjoying the sight of Tonks draping herself all over Harry after realizing he was aware once again.

"Harry!" Tonks crooned and gave him a quick hug, smoothed his hair and pushed gently against his good shoulder when he tried to get up. "No you don't Mister. You are going to be put to bed and you will be staying in bed until I say you can get up."

Harry looked up at her and with a cheeky smile on his face, "Yes mum what every you say mum."

Tonks humphed and hit him on his good side gently. They were approaching Hogwarts main doors now and her hair changed rapidly to the same shade as that of Harry's mothers and her eyes changed as she glared at him to mirror his mother's eyes.

"Really Harry. You don't say that sort of thing to the person you have been sleeping with for nearly a year, young man." She smiled at him sweetly and waggled a finger before his face.

Harry looked decidedly sick at the new look and groaned loud enough for everyone to hear. "Don't ever say something like that again with that face on. It's just too... too odd... for that sort of talk."

They were all laughing as they entered Hogwarts and made their way through the castle and Tonks with a satisfied smirk shifted back to her more normal look. They were still chuckling when Albus looked up to see Rowena hovering at the opened door to her chambers.



Albus shook his head at the playful banter going on between the two lovers, thinking back to the last couple that had behaved in such a manner at Hogwarts. His smile grew wider as he thought of Lily and James and he thought it rather appropriate that their son should end up with a woman who was just as head strong as Lily.

The main room of the suite of rooms had been altered to fit five beds and some chairs next to them and a section of the room had been magically enlarged to provide enough room for Silvenestri to nest down and heal. Tonks immediately directed Harry's stretcher over to one of the beds next to the one where Hermione lay sleeping. Hermione had expended so much magical energy through the battle that she had collapsed and Minerva was seated by the fire next to the enlarged area where Silvenestri was to lie and was sipping at a steaming cup of herbal tea.

The dragon child uttered a soft growl, fairly leaping out of Charlie's arms. He had been aware for the last part of the walk through the castle that the little girl was trembling more and more violently and that her body weight had been steadily increasing and he had known that she could not long be able to hold her human form. He was far from surprised when she launched herself out of his arms and transformed mid air to land on the floor in the prepared place with a dull thud and rumbling groan.

"Remove his armor, My Dear and sponge the wounds clean as best you can. I shall summon Madame Pomfrey." Rowena advised Tonks and vanished.

Ron looked anxiously at Hermione looking for any signs of physical wounds and finding none he looked to Harry who was sitting up in his bed while Ginny continued to peel off the damaged armor and Tonks fetched cool clean water and a small pot of herbal ointment.

"So how long before you would have told me about this group you started?" He scowled and settled himself in the chair next to Hermione, wincing as in her sleep Hermione rolled in her sleep to turn her back to him.

Harry grunted softly as the last of the armor and the burned undershirt was removed, presenting the full damage done to his chest and side to those who watched.

"I was planning on saying something to those who needed to know on the last day of the school year since there are places I have to go and no..." He looked to Dumbledore who arched an eyebrow enquiringly. "It is not Number 4."

The Headmaster grinned wickedly and winked. "And where might you be staying this summer Harry, if I might ask?"

Dumbledore nodded briefly to Rowena as she appeared through the door which opened behind her to admit Madam Pomfrey. The school nurse's normally pristine white robes were stained with blood and earth from her work outside the castle in treating the injured. With a 'tut' marking her thoughts of the entire affair the nurse hurried to Harry's side, inspecting the wounds with cool professional eyes.

Harry sighed softly and looked at Tonks. She shrugged slightly, deferring to Madam Pomfrey's expertise as the nurse efficiently showed her a better way of bathing the wounds clean. His eyes moved on to the other members of his dragon host.

"Well, I was hoping that some of my other members would be willing to accompany me on a little journey. I have a city to check out. I need to make sure it is above sea level and if it is not I need to devise a way of getting it above sea level." He hissed as Tonks rested the cloth against a particular deep area of burn.

"Sorry. I'll go with you to find the city." Tonks said and when Madam Pomfrey lightly touched her shoulder she was quick to give way to the nurse who had a potion bottle in one hand and discarded the soiled water basin quickly.

"And me." Hagrid paused in the doorway his silver coat stained with blood and then he proceeded to stomp over to Charlie who was tending to Silvenestri. "We found that Fireball, Charlie. Managed to stop the bleeding but I don't think the beast will survive. He's bad hurt he is."

Harry realized that Hagrid must have been helping the other Dragon Tamers with the wounded beasts and he was sorry that he had needed to hurt the dragons. He was angry with the beasts riders who had controlled their mounts through magic and had no care for the dragons well being. From the look of it Hagrid was just as angry as he himself was only it looked far more impressive on the half giant.

“Thank you, both of you. If anyone else wishes to join us then this is your chance to step forward.” Harry sighed softly as he lay down under Madam Pomfrey’s direction and allowed her to fuss over the last of his burns before she moved to slap Ron out of the way and examine Hermione.

“An ocean cruise would do you all the world of good. If you like I shall arrange for the boat tickets for you. Just let me know how many will be going.” Dumbledore was seated next to Minerva himself sipping at herbal tea while watching Charlie working on Silvenestri. At the looks directed at him, all marked by confusion, disbelief and curiosity the headmaster shrugged. “Well Voldemort wouldn’t think to look for Harry on Muggle transport now would he?” He was rather pleased when only Ron, Charlie, Kingley and Madam Pomfrey flinched at the name. No one gasped in horror or outrage and he nodded to himself, pleased. ‘Harry must have the others trained to speak his name without the usual horror. That is good.’

A low rumble of disapproval filled the room and all eyes turned to the dragon wondering what Charlie had done to get a rise out of her but they found Silvenestri glaring at them, not Charlie. “Why can’t he fly with me?” Silvenestri demanded and then hissed angling her head to watch as Charlie pulled melted scales away from more healthy scales along her flank.

“Well, it is a very long flight and you would only be able to take up to three people. I think we may have at least four in the party and Hagrid does weigh rather more then the rest of us put together.” Harry reasoned and watched as Hermione stirred under Madam Pomfrey’s ministrations. “I don’t think that Voldemort would think to check out every boat for me and he should not know that I will be going North anyway. Like Albus says it would be safer. I would expect Voldemort

to monitor every fireplace and apparating point around the world to spot me, not monitor Muggle means of transportation.”

“You won’t be flying anywhere until we check out your wings.” Charlie muttered to the dragon as he peered at a particularly nasty looking wound near the wing joint high on her back. “Flying too soon may cripple you and you would not be happy grounded for life, now would you?”

Silvenestri rumbled but subsided, sniffing her disgust but at Harry’s look she settled. She was in pain and just about every part of her body screamed with that distress. No doubt when she felt better they could return to this conversation and she would show the humans how resilient silver dragons were.

Minerva sighed and looked up from her cup of tea. Her voice was soft and even when she met the Headmasters eyes and then she looked at Harry. “I would like to go too if that’s alright?”

“Of course you can come with us Professor. I would be honored to have you accompany us.” Movement near him drew his attention and he found himself looking into Hermione’s eyes. “Hermione do you want to come with me to Norway to find the city of the Forgotten?” Harry thought that she looked a little drunk.

At Hermione’s confused look Madam Pomfrey tapped her on the shoulder lightly. “Not now, silly girl.”

‘I need to augment the lessons on conserving energy I think.’ Harry mused.

Hermione finally seemed to realize where they were and with a glance at Harry nodded her agreement to go on the journey and fell back on the bed. Staring at the ceiling she sighed and muttered about improving her magical strength only to have Dumbledore chuckle.

“It is your stamina not strength that needs work, my dear.”

Harry nodded agreement, understanding the difference between the two.

Ginny entered the room straightening the school robes she had taken the opportunity to change into. "Harry, can I come too?"

"I don't see why not. You both had better see your mum's about it though. With Professor McGonagall along I doubt they will object." Harry yawned, the easing of his pain allowing the exhaustion to start overtaking him. 'Sleep would be good... Where's my favorite night toy?' He thought reaching around and pulling Tonks closer he snuggled his head into her side. 'There she is.'

Tonks gave a little sigh and shook her head, settling more comfortably next to Harry and letting his head rest in her lap. Gently she ran her fingers through his hair, wrinkling her nose at the smell of dragon fire that clung to him and began humming a song to help him sleep as she did every night he came to her.

Ginny was all smiles until she and Hermione noticed Ron looking at his sister with an odd assessment in his gaze. "What is it Ron?" She scowled at him, her hands moving to her hips and that little frown springing to life making her look a lot like her mother.

"I don't think Mum would let you go that far unless she or Dad went with you." He said, knowing from past instances how stubborn Mrs. Weasley could be. He was wondering how he might be able to keep Hermione from going on what was certain to be a dangerous trip. 'They have no idea what could be waiting for them in this forgotten city or even if it exists at all. Why should they risk their lives for something that probably isn't there?'

"Mrs. Granger might object too but as far as I'm concerned they all can come." Harry muttered from the warmth of his bed, eyes still shut.

Tonks was singing softly to him and then thanking Albus when the Headmaster passed her a cloth wet with herbal solution. Tenderly she dabbed at his burns, further numbing the pain and allowing him to drift off to sleep.

Ron sighed softly, looked at Harry and then at the hulking form of the dragon his brother was tending to. Shaking his head slightly he left the room. He had better figure a way of telling his mother about the events of the day without having her go into super worry mode. He

would leave Harry and the others to plan the trip to Norway and decide who would be going.

Silvenestri growled low in her throat and the growl slowly and gradually graduated into a rumbling purr. Charlie chuckled softly as he asked Madam Pomfrey for some herbal solutions that he thought might go better with the worst of her wounds. Once he got her pain levels lowered she would quickly enough settle to sleep.

[illegible]

5th April 1997 6:11 PM A.D

“Damn, why me?”

Tonks hung over the toilet bowl, her stomach roiling. For nearing two months now this had been happening. With a low moan she settled herself near the sink and decided that she had finished for now. If she was careful there would be no return to the delights of worshiping the porcelain god.

“I lead a good life. I’m not into Muggle drugs or wand sniffing. Why the hell am I throwing up every morning?” she dared not move just yet. Not until she was certain she would not repeat the performance.

After a few minutes in which her stomach decided it was going to behave Tonks slowly climbed to her feet and looked at herself in the mirror. Once again she found herself looking at her normal face, the morphing seemed to have come unstuck after each of the episodes of vomiting.

“Why am I sick every morning lately? It’s almost like I’m...” Her thought processed rebelled at the very idea but slowly the wheels of thought began to turn again. Was it possible? No, surely not. That simply couldn’t be possible. “We used ever form of protection we could get our hands on.” She glared at her reflection and then stomped very ungracefully to her room to find Minerva waiting for her.

“Are you alright Tonks?” the professor was watching her carefully. “You were in there for quite a while.” Minerva walked over to her and directed her to a chair nearby.

“I’m fine.” Tonks’ voice was husky with the after effects of her morning illness. “Have you seen Harry and Silvenestri? How is she this morning?” Tonks asked concerned.

The dragon had healed slowly, even with Harry helping Charlie care for her injuries using magic. It was now two months since the battle and she despaired Silvenestri would heal despite Charlie and Harry’s assurances. The dragon had taken deep burn damage and strained her wings trying to control their landing and those were injuries that required time to heal.

‘She was the most severely injured of us all. I know she needs time but I thought they would have allowed her to fly by now. Charlie still says it’s too soon and Harry has not contradicted him.’ She mused.

“Silvenestri seems to be making fine progress. She was moving around more when I was there earlier this morning and complaining to Harry about the restrictions Charlie placed over her. Harry in no uncertain terms told her to follow Charlie’s schedule as he did not want her wounds to reopen and if she placed too great a strain on the new skin the scales beginning to form might be deformed and need to be pulled. He knows exactly what to say to shut up a whining dragon.” Minerva grinned. “I don’t know if there really is any danger of that happening as the wounds seem well healed over but it settled her.” Minerva commented as she produced some tea and sandwiches for them both for breakfast.

Tonks looked faintly green at the sight of the food and with a muttered curse was running for the bathroom and for another session of worshipping the god. Minerva sighed, looked at the food and waited for Tonks to return, noting the paleness of the woman when she did.

“Tonks, My Dear, are you’re sure you’re all right?” She murmured helping the younger woman to her chair again. “Perhaps we should have Madam Pomfrey take a look at you?”

"I'm fine." Tonks whispered. "Fine. It was just the smell of food got to me for a minute, that's all. Stomach bug."

The Professor studied her for a moment and nodded, a speculative twinkle in her eye as she poured herbal tea and offered Tonks the cup.

Tonks sighed and nodded by way of a thank you and sipped the tea carefully. It seemed that the herbal brew was the only thing that settled her stomach these days. "So how are things coming along with the plans for the summer?" She attempted to change the topic.

Minerva looked at Tonks with narrowed eyes but decided to allow the subject change, for the moment at least. "Our plans are progressing well. We have Ginny, Hermione, Mrs. Weasley, Hagrid and Mrs. and Mr. Granger coming with us. With you, me and Harry that makes nine. Ten with Silvestri accompanying us as she insists she will be well enough to travel."

Tonks nodded and took another sip of her drink while trying to work out what was wrong with her. It could not possibly be the unthinkable thought and perhaps she should consider taking the professor into her confidence.

After leaving Tonks to her herbal tea and belated breakfast Minerva headed to the hospital wing intent on checking Tonks' file and the date of her last full physical. Perhaps she should have a talk to Madam Pomfrey as well.

Following breakfast Tonks made her way to the seventh floor intending to see how Silvestri was doing while Harry and the others were in classes. Being somewhat distracted she ran into Mrs. Weasley who with some quick footwork and display of good reflexes managed to right herself and stop Tonks from falling over. Mrs. Weasley was at Hogwarts to assist in planning the trip to Norway and she was enjoying herself immensely as she was looking forward to spending time with her youngest child. It would be just Mrs. Weasley and Ginny going of the Weasley clan as she had told Ron in a rather tongue in cheek manner that he would need to keep his father in line while she was gone.



“Good morning, Tonks.” She said giving her the usual cold morning glare. Mrs. Weasley did not quite approve of the nature of her relationship with Harry at their young age and she certainly did not approve of the entire school knowing that they were sleeping together but she tended to forget the cold looks a few minutes after they met. “Where are you off to?”

“I’m on the way to see how Silvenestri is doing today.” Tonks returned ignoring the disapproval that she knew would last only until Molly was distracted again. Molly Weasley would allow Harry to lead his own life and not try to control him despite her looking on Harry as another son. For that Tonks could not love the woman enough.

“If it’s ok with you Tonks, can I come? I’d like to see the living symbol of the Dragon host that has Charlie grinning stupidly and more determined than ever to work with Dragons.” Molly followed Tonks up the stairs and tried to work out why Harry had started to date Tonks and not someone like Ginny or Hermione whom she would have thought would have been more attractive to him.

“I don’t mind and I think Silvenestri would like to meet you now that you will not be trying to take her from Harry.” Tonks looked over her shoulder at Molly a small smile revealing her amusement.

Molly hrumphed but smiled behind the girls back. When he had been able to the first thing that Harry had done was to apologize for the necessity of his actions and then remove the memory charms he had placed on certain people. Molly suppressed a shiver at the memory of that first meeting with the silver dragon, that innocent pretty little girl.

Tonks was also thinking of that day and how surprised she had been when Charlie had not blown up at Harry for casting the spell on him not once but twice. It seemed that Charlie could forgive just about anything where a Dragon’s best interests were concerned and he had even gone so far as to say that he would have done the same thing to protect the ones he cared for.

They’ve reached the room of requirements quickly and entered to be almost blinded by the bright sunlight hitting after the semi darkness of the hallway. They had moved Silvenestri here when Charlie and Harry had mutually decided she was well enough to make the journey.

The dragon's constant moans for the warm beach had been ignored until Charlie had decided her wounds were sealed and she was sensible enough not to tempt fate by going for a swim in the salt water or to try flying before she was ready. Since Harry had concurred with Charlie's judgment Silvenestri had done little more than grumble and follow his instructions.

The dragon had recently enjoyed her first salt water bath under the combined ministrations of both Charlie and Harry. There was rather a lot of dragon to scrub and the pair had thoroughly enjoyed a water fight with the great beast in the process. Now, gleaming silver once again shone from her hide and her wounds were hidden by her wings extended out over the warm sands to gather in the warmth of the sun. Silvenestri looked magnificent.

"She is such a pretty thing." Molly murmured.

Silvenestri looked up at that to see who had come to visit and gave a demure nod to Tonks and Molly. She had been reminded of her dragon dignity by the way Charlie had treated her over the past couple of months and Harry laughingly said she was turning into a snob and that she should loosen up.

"Hello Tonks, Molly. How have you both been lately?" She used her most gentle voice as she lowered her head back to the sand of the beach.

"Quite well, love. How are you doing with out fresh kills to help heal you?" Tonks asked walking away from the door and taking a seat next to the still more gray than silver dragon. 'She really needs something fresh and uncooked not all the cooked meals the house elves are giving her. I'll have to take Harry and Charlie to task over her diet.'

Silvenestri raised her head slightly from the sands to watch Molly who was still standing by the door and making no move to approach her. The woman looked extremely nervous. "You can come in Molly. I won't bite. Please come in, have a seat and enjoy the sunshine with me. I am healing quite well Tonks and I am being fed raw meat and quite fresh kills too. I would probably do a little better if the first year

students would stop trying to enter the room to gawk at me every chance they get.”

Molly drew a deep breath and bravely walked over to sit in the sand next to Tonks who was giggling at the way Silvenestri described the first years looking at her. Molly took the moment to look around the lovely beach and noticed a lean-to set under some palm trees to one side. A cluster of school books were scattered around the place and a suit of silver armour leaned against one of the trees. Tonks noted the armour and the signs of resent repairs to it.

“Tonks? Who has been staying here?” Molly asked turning back to find the jewel eyes of the dragon closed as she enjoyed a snooze in the sun.

“Harry I would say by all the books.” Tonks returned and with a soft moan of pleasure lay back on the sand and laughed softly when Molly, after quickly looking around to make certain they were alone, snuggled herself down and enjoyed the tropical heat. It was so hard to believe that they were actually in Hogwarts. Again and again Molly’s gaze went to the lean-to until with a huff she gave up and with mutters about untidy beaches she went to tackle cleaning up the area. Tonks chuckled and watched her as she worked, unable to stir herself to help Molly.

Molly hummed softly to herself, quite happily cleaning the lean too until she happened to look back. Tonks had disrobed and was sleepily working on her sun tan. Molly studied her for a long while, noting the thickening of the girl’s middle and recalling the comments made about Tonks being sick in the morning recently. Molly hummed softly to herself and sighed.

“Tonks, dear, don’t take this the wrong way, but are you eating properly? I mean you are getting a little large around the middle from my angle.” She walked over to Tonks and sat next to her.

Tonks gasped and looked down at herself, wishing she had never taken off her robes. “How can I be putting on weight? I mean I’ve been throwing up every morning for the past two months.” Tonks considered her figure and thought that maybe, just maybe there was perhaps a little expansion there. If she had kept her robes on Molly

would not have noticed and she herself would not have had to admit that she was gaining at least a little weight.

Molly arched an eyebrow at Tonks and hummed again. Tonks sighed and stretched back out on the warm sand ignoring the older woman's look. With a soft sigh Molly opened her mouth to say something when Silvenestri heaved herself to her feet and stretched out her wings taking time to stretch slowly and thoroughly. Molly backed quickly at the size of the gaping maw that opened in a profound yawn displaying wand sized fangs

"That's soooooooooo much better." The dragon sighed and arching her back she proceeded to stretch first her legs one at the time, then her neck and arched her back until it cracked and then flapped her wings vigorously.

With howls of protest Tonks and Molly scrambled to get out of the way for the sand shower they were subjected to.

"What is the matter with you? Warm sand is just heaven sliding over your scales. It cleans away all the little bugs that can be so annoying." Silvenestri folded her wings neatly to her back. "I told them my wings were fine to use. Now all I have to do is convince them to allow me to get out of here and return to the forest." Silvenestri eyed both glaring women innocently. "Tonks I don't think you are fat but you are gaining just a little weight."

Tonks sniffed, brushing the sand from her hair but looked up at the dragon she thought of as a younger sister and smiled. "Thanks. I just hope no one else thinks I'm a little larger." She paused and looked over at Molly who was watching her with a serious expression. "I think I'll have to go for some extra runs around the lake. The added exercise will get rid of any extra weight."

Molly arched an eyebrow and sighed. "If you were getting fat it probably would help." She responded. "Now tell me, have you been eating more frequently and perhaps a little more than usual... and possibly a few things you normally would think of as rather... not exactly to your taste? Or has it been just throwing up in the morning Tonks?"

Tonks stared at Molly, thinking about her past eating habits while Silvenestri looked herself over and blew excess sand out of the scales over her leg where the scar tissue was still uncovered by scales, annoyed that the sand was irritating the scar. The dragon gave herself a good shake that had Molly and Tonks backing away yet again and then began to blur into the change.

“Well now that you mention it I have been eating perhaps just a bit more than normal. And some of the food I didn’t like before I rather like now. Why?”

Silvenestri, now in her human form skipped up to her, smiling brightly at Molly and reached out to brush the sand from Tonks’ skin. “Please can I hunt? I need something really fresh.”

“I see.” Molly sighed shaking her head slightly. “Come on. Let us see if we can smuggle Silvenestri out into the woods.” Molly offered a hand to Silvenestri and her other hand to Tonks and gently pulled them toward the door.

Since it was the change of classes they needed to proceed with caution in avoiding the students who were fascinated by the dragon and it was almost an hour before they managed to escape the castle unseen. Once they entered the Forbidden Forest Silvenestri changed back to her true form and after promising to do all of her hunting from ground level and not to take flight and test Harry’s displeasure by trying out her wings she headed out to find some unfortunate animal to have for lunch.

Tonks brought Molly to the clearing fronting Harry’s cave and Molly looked around the clearing and in the cave. There were still some old scrolls inside but otherwise the clearing and cave was abandoned.

“Did Harry really live in this cave for over a year?” Molly asked when they settled outside of the cave to wait for Silvenestri to return.

“Yes. He lived here for two years and before he settled here he lived on the road for a year and at another cave for about three years before coming to this place.” Tonks looked around the forest thinking about the tales Harry had told her of his travels in the past.

Molly sighed and nodded wishing that the boy could have led something approaching a normal life. She looked up when Silvenestri's huge form emerged silently from the forest a deer clamped securely between her jaws. How did such a huge beast manage to move so silently?

"I see you had some luck." Tonks rose to her feet and quickly headed into the cave to let Silvenestri eat. "You might want to join me Molly. It's not very pretty when she eats."

Silvenestri growled around the corpse and then dropped it. "There is nothing wrong with my eating habits. I'm quick and neat and I don't play with my food." She dropped herself immediately to a crouch over the kill and tore off a haunch with bloodied teeth.

Molly's eyes widened and she followed Tonks quickly into the cave.

Silvenestri growled softly around the dangling leg of the deer. "Humans." With a hum of pleasure she sucked the blood from the leg.

Inside the cave was just as dark and damp as it had been a short time before but Molly decided it certainly had its good points. Tonks was seated on one of the rocks that dotted the floor looking over one of the old scrolls while keeping an ear out for Silvenestri to finish her meal.

Molly sat near the cave mouth waiting and watching Tonks in the poor light, thinking. 'Throwing up in the mornings, eating things she normally does not like and eating more when she can keep it down... I know what that sounds like but how to get her to see Madam Pomfrey? She should be suspicious herself but she doesn't look to be concerned.' She looked over at Tonks noting that her robe did hide the extra weight.

A few minutes later both women were lost in their own little worlds of thought until Silvenestri's head blocked the cave mouth and she burped a very meaty smelling burp.

"I'm finished. Can we go find Harry and let him know that I'm fine now? I want to fly again." Her face as always was meticulously cleaned of the evidence of her feast and she was absently sucking

the last of the blood from her claws. Her starlight eyes were shining with new light now that she had enjoyed a fresh kill.

Tonks started and looked up at Silvenestri. "Oh. That was quick dear. Sounds like a good idea but I think he is in D.A.D.A right now. We may have to wait until after the class."

She exited the cave with Molly right behind her and the dragon belched again, prompting Molly to give her a glare.

"Belching is fine but do put your claw in front of your face when you do it and be sure to say 'excuse me', Dear."

Silvenestri blinked, staring at the short human for a long moment before meekly nodding and whispering, to Tonks' amusement a quick 'excuse me.'

The dragon glided sinuously through the forest and just before they left the cover of the trees Silvenestri changed back into her human form. No sooner had they left the forest than they found themselves confronted by an intent looking Minerva McGonagall and Madam Pomfrey.

"Ah there you are Tonks." Minerva murmured. "I would like you to have a check up please before we get interrupted. Won't take long at all and then you can go about your business."

"But I told you this morning I was fine." Tonks protested. "Why the sudden check up?" Tonks glanced at Molly who was carefully blank faced and Silvenestri who blinked at her and smiled her little girl smile. 'Merlin I have a little stomach flu and everyone thinks I'm dieing or something.'

"Well it has been a year since your last check up and as you know Auror's are supposed to be checked every six months. Madam Pomfey is free just now and you don't look too busy to me. Now would be best." Minerva returned and nodded a greeting to Molly and Silvenestri and smiled.

'Ah, so I'm not the only one suspicious. Good for you Minerva. She wouldn't have gone near the infirmary if you didn't come up with something like that.' Molly thought returning Minerva's nod.

'Is Tonks sick? She doesn't look sick but why would they be concerned if she wasn't? I think she looks fine and that's all that matters.' Silvenestri watched the subtle body language of the people surrounding her with great interest. Humans really were strange creatures.

"Oh, alright if I have to. I am telling you that I'm fine and as fit as I can be." Tonks sighed in defeat and allowed herself to be led into the castle and up to the Hospital wing where one corner was already curtained off waiting for her. 'Well at least its going to be private and I don't have to have anybody who just waltzes through gawking at me.'

Tonks walked into the curtained nook and sat up on the bed waiting for Madam Pomfrey who was fetching a number of potions that would allow her wand to function through Tonks Metamorphmagus's ability no matter how many times she changed form during the examination. Tonks was quite used to having to drink potions before a physical and eyed the evil looking purple potion in a shot glass with distaste.

"Come now Tonks drink up. We've done this before and we can be finished in under a half-hour if you stop looking as if it will bite you." Madam Pomfrey chirped and handed the shot glass to Tonks.

"I hate this stuff." The low growl was almost worthy of Silvenestri but Tonks downed the potion in one gulp making a face at the rotten eggs taste and the oily slide down her throat. 'There is an upside to my ability and a down side and that certainly is one of the down sides. I know Auror's have to drink it but I'm sure I am given a double dose.'

Madam Pomfrey nodded her approval then pulled out her wand and whispering a quick incantation she ran the wand up and down Tonks's body. The tip of the wand began to glow the usual blood red showing her blood pressure and Madame Pomfrey pursed her lips slightly.

"Blood pressure is a little elevated but nothing to worry about. For you that is quite normal."



Next the tip developed a light blue glow which caused the nurse to nod, pleased that there was no damage to her nervous system. 'Well that's good considering the affairs of the past few months. No damage has been taken since her last physical.'

Her heart and brain activity was scanned next resulting in a steady blue green glow indicating that all was normal. Her muscle capacity and density revealed that she was a little out of shape since her last check up and Madam Pomfrey was quick to note that on her chart.

'Well at least when they are in the barracks they have that morning exercise regime to follow. Obviously Tonks has been remiss in keeping up her routine.'

Tonks was bored watching the wand move over her. Only the wielder could see the changing colour spectrum but from the nurses reaction she knew all was as she had expected, quite normal. She watched the nurse move the wand over her lower body and stifled a yawn.

Madam Pomfrey looked at her wand for a moment and then wafted the device over Tonks again, from head to foot repeating the scans then lifted her eyes to meet the Auror's.

"When did we last have our monthly, then?" Madam Pomfrey asked looking at the pink wand tip and knowing that she alone could see the colour change.

Tonks considered the question while her eyes shifted to Harry's green but her hair style and colour remained the same. 'I hate the personal questions. Sometimes I could just knock their teeth out and tell them it's none of their business.' "Why do you ask?" Her annoyance was obvious in the tone of her voice.

"We have this argument every time and I since I am the registered nurse here I always win, Nymphadora Tonks. Answer the question." Madam Pomfrey waved the wand at her and glared.

'It is possible. A great many of my birth control potions have vanished over the last few months.' Potions designed to suppress the fertility of both male and female alike. The entire school knew what Harry and

Tonks were up to and she had few illusions as to who was making free with the contents of her cupboards.

“Well if you must know it was just a few... ahm. A month... wait a minute... I think it was... About three months ago.” Tonks blushed as she thought back to her last menstrual cycle and eyed the nurse warily. “I hadn’t realized it was that long. Is there a... problem?”

“Well that depends how you define the word problem.” Madam Pomfrey sniffed. “I’ll be back in a few minutes.” Ignoring the women waiting on her Madam Pomfrey hurried from the room. ‘If it’s what I think it is and they have been using contraception potions I had better take a look at the last batch of potions. They arrived about nine or ten weeks ago. If they are faulty...!’

“Something’s wrong with my internal biological clock?” Tonks watched Madam Pomfrey disappear through the door and exchanged looks with Molly and Minerva. ‘I might not want children right now but I would like to have some in a few years. After we deal with Voldemort and it is safe to bring up children again. I’d like children and not just for myself but for Harry. He needs to know that he could be a good father despite what he says about himself sometimes. I think he’d make a great dad.’

Both Minerva and Molly shrugged and watched the door, waiting. A few minutes later the nurse returned and she looked far from happy.

“Have you been throwing up of a morning? Do you eat things now you hatred before? Do you feel hungry through the night? I notice you have put on a little weight.” Madam Pomfrey rapid fired the questions at Tonks and barely waited for her nods of confirmation before firing off the next question. “Right, you are fine physically considering you are pregnant.”

Madam Pomfrey went to her potion tray near the bed, chose a deep gray coloured bottle and measured out a small dose before handing it to Tonks. “This will confirm your condition and tell us how far along you are.”

Tonks downed the potion and the nurse swished her wand at Tonks with a practiced flick and then watched the wand closely.

‘At least this one tasted of apples.’ Tonks stared at the wand, seeing nothing different about it though the nurse was staring intently at it. ‘I can’t be pregnant. We took precautions. Something’s wrong, I know it. We took potions. What if I am? I wanted children but... later. What if I am pregnant?’

Madam Pomfrey stared at her wand and the good two inches that now glowed pink.

“Well, congratulations, Tonks. You are two months pregnant, about seven and a half weeks I think to be exact. The child is fine and we are going to need to talk about... your diet...”

Madame Pomfrey stared at the empty bed and turned to watch Tonks run out of the room and sighed. “Guess Harry’s going to hear about it very soon.” She murmured.

Minerva glanced at Madam Pomfrey and sighed. “Did you see her face?”

The nurse shook her head slightly. “No. What did I miss?”

‘Oh dear.’ Molly sighed, running in the slip stream of Tonks’ passage with Silvenestri right beside her. ‘Harry should still be in the D.A.D.A classroom. I think he’s in for the surprise of his life.’

Silvenestri was staring at Tonks in awe. She had no idea that Tonks could change herself into something resembling her draconic face. The elongated teeth similar to her own and the pointed elf like ears and even a golden tint to her skin rather like that of Shar and her eyes positively glowed with draconic thoughts. Silvenestri rather liked the look but from the look of Molly Weasley this was not considered a good thing.

[illegible]

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## Chapter 20: Shock.

/ Telepathic /

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Madam Pomfrey looked from the door through which Molly and Silvenestri had so recently departed to Minerva and sighed. She only hoped that the pair would be able to reach Tonks before she found Harry or the newly discovered soon to be baby would be minus a father before the young man even knew he was to be a father. Considering the general draconic appearance of the young woman on her exit Madam Pomfrey wondered if even the redoubtable Molly Weasley and a dragon might be enough to save Harry.

“I think you should go and find Albus, Minerva. We might need the help in calming her down and besides he will need to know about this.”

The Professor nodded and sighed. "I would have thought they both would have been sensible enough to take precautions. Tonks at lease should have known better."

Madam Pomfrey snorted softly and looked at the potion bottle with narrowed eyes. “I need to have a talk to a few people. It seems that certain type of potion or potions are not as effective as they should be. You can be sure I will be investigating this and I only hope that others have not been using the batch.”

Minerva hurried from the hospital ward and the nurse sighed as she looked around. She could only hope that they would find and rescue Harry or run Tonks to ground and thus prevent the addition of another patent to her ward at the moment.

‘Mr. Potter has been doing rather well this year. It would be a shame for him to end up in here this close to the end of the year.’ She thought and exited the ward moving quickly down a side hall. She had patients to attend.

[illegible]

Professor Lupin rested his hands on the desk and smiled, well aware that everyone in the class was too occupied by their projects to notice. He liked the more senior classes as the students were mature enough to know the value of the subject matter and were generally prepared to do their own research and complete their projects and refer to their teacher only when they actually needed help. He had set this lesson aside for them to work at completing their projects as they were so near to finishing for the year and after the battle he was well content to enjoy a quieter routine.

During the last two months he, like other staff members at Hogwarts had been researching and then teaching as much information as they could find on those who in antiquity had been named Dragon Lords. This included information on the Greater Dragons and what made them different from the Lesser Dragons though some of the student body still seemed incapable of determining the differences in draconic relationship and abilities.

"But a dragon is a dragon" were words he was heartily fed up with hearing. At least the senior classes seemed to have grasped many of the subtleties as well as the more glaringly obvious differences that gave the varied draconic species their unique characteristics.

Of course it would have been a great deal easier simply to bring Harry into the classes and explain what a Dragon Lord was to the students but where was the good in doing it the easy way? Research and projects by the students would hammer more through their brains than a simple lecture from what amounted to a living legend. Some people despite what had occurred would always see Harry as the boy-who-lived and not as the rather dangerous individual he had grown to be.

Oh yes, the Boy Who Lived was dangerous enough but a Dragon Lord was something else again. Hopefully the projects being completed now would demonstrate that to many of the students and they would develop a natural caution without segregating Harry. They needed to warn everyone on the dangers of Dragon Lords but they needed people to see the human face of the legend and Harry thus far had acted more human like than the Lords of the past had been shown in the legends that had survived to the present day.

The most popular question amid the first and second year students had become could anyone become a Dragon Lord. The thought of hundreds of children running around emulating the figures of legend was enough to cause even a werewolf to cower in fear. While more intelligent questions had come from the older students Lupin had decided to set all of his students, regardless of their year the project to discover as much information as they could on the enigmatic but feared figures of legend and their mounts. It would be interesting to see the final results and just who had dug deeper than the popular legends.

Through the last two months Harry had largely been a good sport about the students who seemed to consider him to be the easy fix for their projects. During the first days of the project given by Lupin to his classes Harry had been inundated by those expecting him to simply give them the answers they needed. It had not taken long for Harry to express his own view on what was and was not appropriate research.

At this time Harry was reading a book on Dragon Lords written sometime in the 14th century and ignoring the looks of those who had been disappointed by his refusal to answer their questions yet again. Every lesson was the same, someone tried to get him to tell them some details they were perfectly capable of looking up themselves in the wonders of Hogwarts library. To his absolute disgust Professor Lupin had not let him off the project. While he was the real thing the Professor had decided it would do him the world of good to research what was fact and fiction and Lupin had added that he needed to see for himself why the Dragon Lords had gained so fearsome a reputation through the ages.

There were a few students Harry did help, those being the members of his Dragon Host though Hermione rarely asked him any details. She was keen on gaining as much information as possible from the library and finishing the project and then doing a comparison project with the information she learned from Harry. It was so typically a Hermione thing to do that Harry had simply shaken his head the first day he realized she was essentially working on two projects instead of one.

He was finding the book to be rather short on facts and long on supposition as in detailed flowery script it described the bloodthirsty rampage of the Dragon Lords and their beasts. In the midst of the general silence broken by the occasional rustle of clothing or turning of a page the sudden interruption was like a sudden dousing in cold water. The entire class started as the door flew open and Harry looked up from his book wondering why such drivel had ever been written to see Tonks storm through the door. At least he thought it was Tonks as there was something decidedly wrong with her face.

"I don't know what you've done Harry but I think you better run." Hermione whispered.

With a puzzled look at Hermione Harry glanced back as Professor Lupin closed his book and turned to see who it was who had disturbed his class. The fiery gleam in her eyes and almost reptilian look to her face caused him to stand, drawing her attention away from scanning his class. He had no idea what was going on but Tonks knew appropriate protocols for interrupting class and appearing in such an unseemly manner just was not done.

'I have no idea what this is about but whoever she is upset with had better be able to outrun her.' Her head snapped around at his movement and Lupin felt his hackles rise at the look directed at him but let it not be said that Lupin himself was a coward. 'I've only ever seen Tonks this upset once before and that was when she learned Sirius had died.'

"Is there something we can do for you Tonks?"

Tonks smiled a particular toothy smile. "No, nothing you can help me with, Professor. I just came to kill Harry." Her wand was out and in her hand and aimed at Harry in the same breath and the first binding charm on her lips.

Harry's eyes met those of Tonks and he saw a silent promise that he was about to hurt a great deal in a very short time. He had been about to laugh at Hermione's comment but all thoughts of amusement fled and he dived out of his chair and bolted to slide into the shelter of Professor Lupin's desk. Behind him Hermione was just as quick to throw herself out of her seat and out of the blast zone as two spells



rocketed in. The student seated on the other side of Harry's former position was not so quick on the uptake and was knocked out cold when the spells intended to hit Harry caught him in their area of effect.

"What! What did I do this time?" Harry scrambled on hands and knees around the desk, parking himself in the relative safety of the professors slender form certain that Tonks would not target him with the professor between them. "If I'm going to die today I'd at least like to know why?"

Harry peered around Lupin and looked up at the Professor hoping he might shed some light on the situation but Lupin seemed inordinately amused by the entire situation and offered no enlightenment.

'Hmmm it can't be the fight from a few months ago. After all she has already chewed me out for that one. Every day for the first month! What have I done now?'

Professor Lupin resisted the urge to snigger more than a little amused that here was Harry, the third most powerful person in the Wizarding world and he was cowering from his girlfriend in a bad mood. The thought sobered him rather quickly when he realized that Harry had seen fit to place him between the love birds as though expecting him to offer some form of immunity to the young lady's ire.

Bad mistake.

Bad position to be in.

He might well be a werewolf but he was not a stupid werewolf.

'James was never able to handle Lily when she got really worked up either. He usually left me to placate her. I never wondered then why I was the one left to handle her but I think I will not be the default mediator to this generation. Harry faces down Voldemort so lets see how well he can handle Tonks in full rant.'

Harry gasped as the Professor neatly sidestepped and hastily crab crawled himself back to the relative protection of the Professors legs. Lupin tutted softly and glanced warily at Tonks half expecting another round of spells to be targeting him.

He was in time to see salvation in the form of Molly and Silvenestri rush through the doorway. Molly threw her arms around the enraged woman's shoulders, holding her arms to her side and effectively muzzling the spells at least for the moment.

Silvenestri grasped Tonks around the waist, trying to moderate the force of her grip, mindful of the fact that though she could be mistaken for a very young human female she was considerably stronger than a full grown human male.

"Control Nymphadora! Remember an Auror must always have control!" Mrs. Weasley panted.

"Tonks! Tonks, please. Calm down. You will injure some one other than Harry before you actually hit him and you know it." Silvenestri jumped up and down in her agitation, her arms around the woman she thought of as a big sister.

Lupin glanced at his class to find Hermione and a couple of other students leaning over the poor unfortunate victim of Tonks' attack. The boy was still unconscious and Tonks was struggling against the restraints and muttering some dark threats that positively chilled his blood.

Molly gasped at one particular threat, thinking that she really did not need to see Harry's insides walking around and wondering if a reversing curse could actually be used in such a fashion.

"Dear, it's not so bad. We need to talk and you must calm yourself. Let us take you back to the infirmary and we can have a civilized conversation."

Harry cowered behind the professor, peering out from behind his knees and watching with wide worried eyes as for almost a full minute Tonks resisted Molly and Silvenestri. He looked on in horror as suddenly the anger seemed to dissolve and Tonks, in her normal form crumpled into a heap on the floor and started to cry. With a sigh Molly gathered the wand from her unresisting grasp and Silvenestri threw her arms around the shaking shoulders now that she could reach them.

“What’s going on?” Harry whispered.

Tonks cried harder and Harry looked at the Professor in utter confusion. He had no idea what was happening and while he had run in terror from an irate draconic looking Tonks he just felt helpless and utterly useless to do anything now that the immediate danger was past and she was a sobbing heap on the floor. Girls and crying in combination utterly defeated Harry.

“Perhaps you had best comfort her, Harry?” Lupin whispered.

“But... what did I do?” He hesitated before he crawled out from behind the professor and flinched as Tonks upped the level of her wailing and hit the floor with her fist. Mindful that a new bout of temper might be on the way Harry stepped strategically back behind his teacher.

“I have no idea, Harry but I would suggest that you ask her.”

For a moment a look of utter terror crossed his face. She had flattened one of his classmates but it should have been him down on the floor now and he really was not of a mind to have her correct her mistake but at Molly’s frown and Lupin’s nudge he took a hesitant step away from the professor and then another toward the sobbing girl.

A groan from the background drew all eyes and the unconscious boy stirred and Hermione left him to the care of the other students just as Madam Pomfrey appeared in the doorway. The school nurse surveyed the classroom for a moment and motioned to the two boys kneeling beside the still groggy student.

“Take him to the infirmary.” She watched Harry nervously approach Tonks, even going so far as to tentatively lay a hand on her shoulder.

“Tonks?”

‘I see she has not informed him of impending parent hood. Ah well, it will be around the school soon enough.’ When Tonks only cried harder and ignored Harry Madam Pomfrey tutted and nudged Harry out of her way and knelt beside the young woman.

“There now, Dear. Come along with me back to the infirmary and allow me to finish the tests. When I’m done you can come back and try to kill Mr. Potter again... and no doubt do a better job of it than you have thus far. I’ll even allow you to injure him a little and send him my way again. Nothing we can’t handle Dear. Up you get.”

Madam Pomfrey ignored the people watching, focusing on Tonks and led the still sobbing woman from the room, her arms locked comfortingly around her shoulders. A very confused Molly and Silvenestri watched them go and Harry just blinked, totally lost by the situation. Professor Lupin looked grave and the rest of the class looked confused.

“Silvenestri... Mrs. Weasley? Do you know why she wanted to kill me? Do you know what I did?” Harry looked between the two hoping for some answers.

Molly and Silvenestri looked from Tonks who seemed to have stopped crying though she looked dazed and moved only under the direction of the nurse to Harry and Molly sighed, shaking her head slowly.

“No we don’t. All we know is that she went to have her check up and then came running out of the room looking like she wanted to kill.”

Silvenestri looked up at Harry and narrowed her eyes. /On another note I want to fly again Harry. Please? Can I go up tomorrow? I do so want to fly again. /

Harry blinked uncertain for a moment if this was all some bad dream. Tonks was out for his blood then dissolved into a sobbing mass, something Tonks never did and now Silvenestri wanted to fly? He looked at Lupin who was watching all with quiet speculation, wanting to ask him for permission to follow Tonks and find out what was happening.

/Fly? You... You want to fly? I have... Fine. Fine, you can go up tomorrow I suppose but only if you stay within the school grounds and only for an hour no more. No straining that wing. /



“Well this will be interesting. So far it’s worse than when Lily Potter was pregnant.” She mumbled and leaned in close to the doors, listening for a moment.

The nurse winced at the muted sound of cursing and screaming and then the loud clang of something metal hitting stone and she sighed, thinking of the joys ahead. ‘She is going to be fun in a few more months when her hormones really take off. Mood swings will be given new meaning with this one. I wonder if Harry can survive the next few months?’ She thought to herself and then smiled. ‘I wonder if he will survive to the birth?’

Dumbledore considered the nurse for a moment, exchanged a look with Harry and then walked up to Madam Pomfrey and listened through the door. A white eyebrow arched dramatically after a moment of listening to some of the threats Tonks was screaming about Harry and his manhood and rending every male limb from limb and saving other women the hassles of dealing with the male of the species.

“Oh. Albus.” Madam Pomfrey straightened when she realized she was not alone. “I never saw you there.”

The headmaster’s raised eyebrow lowered into a frown at the continuing tirade from within the hospital particularly to the comment “Getting me like this!” Putting two and two together and coming up with a definite four Dumbledore motioned Harry close to him, slipped his wand out and pointed it at the door.

“Mr. Potter I do believe this is your problem and you are going to need to deal with it on your own. No don’t look so worried, My Boy, we are here to support you. Go ahead and I wish you the very best of luck and don’t worry at all about the funeral. I’ll take care of the arrangements personally.” With a bright smile the professor flicked the wand, the doors opened and he pushed Harry through, flicking the wand again and causing the doors to slam shut and lock behind Harry.

“Professor! Harry!” Hermione rushed to the doors only to have Professor Dumbledore’s chuckle stop her and he patted her shoulder gently.

“It’s alright, My Dear. You’ll see.”

Harry looked in stunned amazement at the room around him and at the irate woman just letting fly with a metal tray at the closest wall. The reverberation of metal against stone seemed to free his legs from their stasis and he backed hastily to put some distance between himself and Tonks, which, he realized the next instant was a mistake. Tonks had not noticed his sudden arrival until he moved but now those furious eyes were centered on him and there was an unholy light in them that chilled him to the core.

Outside the doors Hermione wrung her hands together, aware that somehow Dumbledore knew what was going on and that Madame Pomfrey was making no move to enter the ward and rescue Harry from whatever Tonks was going to do to him. The Headmaster smiled cheerfully at her and using the tip of his wand he inscribed a circle in one of the doors and Hermione found she was looking into the ward through the circle.

“Harry.” Tonks fairly purred and Harry felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand up.

“Ah... Hi, Dear. What’s the matter?” Harry pressed his back to the door unaware that in the hallway outside Dumbledore tutted and shunted the viewing circle to the other door so they could see past him.

Tonks was seated on one of the beds and her head had been resting in her hands as though she had had trouble lifting it but there was no such trouble now. The ward was a shambles, broken crockery scattered everywhere and dented metal bowls, basins and bins were on display. One or two broken pieces of furniture also cluttered the usually orderly and neat ward. Resting between her feet Harry could see a weird sculpture that he thought might once have been a tray before it had been bent and twisted like a pretzel into that unrecognizable shape. An unrecognizable but never-the-less disturbing looking sculpture.

“Dear? Don’t you ‘Dear’ me, Harry James Potter.”

Harry gasped as he stared at her and swallowed. Tonks looked at him with the exact same shade eyes and hair as his mother. Indeed at this moment she struck an uncanny resemblance to Lilly Potter.

‘Damn, don’t look at me like that. It’s scary. Uncanny. It’s like being scolded by my mother.’ Harry resisted the urge to move. He suspected that if he so much as twitched he would be targeted for the same sort of abuse the walls of the ward had so recently suffered. ‘That reminds me. I’m going to have to talk with mum some time soon. I’ve been a bit busy and it’s been a few months.’

Hermione flinched when Tonks called Harry by his full name and Dumbledore and Madam Pomfrey nodded slightly, hardly surprised. Tonks had never before called Harry by his full name unless he was in the worst trouble imaginable and Hermione had never heard her say it with such chilling overtones. Beside her Dumbledore solemnly brought his right hand up to touch his eyebrow in a salute to the man who was about to die. Madam Pomfrey giggled like a girl and Hermione, wide eyed with amazement could only stare.

Harry was at a loss as to how to react. It was quite obvious that he was in serious trouble and a pissed off Tonks was something he did not want to deal with. He would happily face a hundred Voldemort’s than have to face his lover’s wrath.

Discretion was undoubtedly the better part of valor but for Harry there was no retreat. The doors were magically sealed behind him and he could not take the suspense much longer.

“What did I do to deserve this sort of treatment Tonks?” Harry winced as the words left his mouth. He had not meant to say that and he certainly had not meant to say it in that injured tone. He knew injured innocence was like waving a flag in front of an irate bull with Tonks in this mood.

Everyone on the other side of the door closed their eyes and Hermione groaned as they waited for Tonks to react.

“Oh, Harry, you fool. You and I are going to have a nice long sit down and talk about how you should talk to a young woman when she is



upset.” Hermione whispered knowing the explosion was imminent by the widening of Tonks’ eyes.

Beside her Dumbledore grinned like a maniac and nodded to her happily watching the drama unfolding in the ward.

“What did you do?” Tonks whispered. “What did you do?” she repeated, this time louder and in a soft sweet voice.

“Bad mistake, Potter.” Madam Pomfrey sighed.

Hermione sucked in a breath and pressed closer to the magical circle not wanting to miss a second of what was to come even as she told herself she really did not want to witness this. This was private, between Tonks and Harry alone but she could not drag herself away from the viewing circle. Curiosity was eating her alive.

“What did you do, Harry my love? I’ll tell YOU WHAT YOU DID HARRY JAMES POTTER!” Tonks’ voice grew louder with each word. “WHAT YOU HAVE DONE IS GET ME PREGNANT! PREGNANT, POTTER! THAT’S WHAT YOU DID!” Tonks screamed.

Molly gasped, watching and listening from the background and Silvenestri blinked, wondering what all the fuss was and moved to the older woman. “Mrs. Weasley? What’s pregnant?”

Madam Pomfrey sniggered at the innocence of the question and supported Hermione who seemed to have jelly for legs. The nurse hummed softly to herself knowing that the worst was now over... if, of course, Harry didn’t make a stupid mistake, she amended. Dumbledore rocked back on his heels and nodded slowly having suspected as much though his eyes did widen at the thought of the future.

‘Oh joy. A potential new Dragon Lord on the way and this child is an heir to the Black’s as well as the Potter’s... Wonderful. Just wonderful. I am so looking forward to another Harry Potter in this school in a few years time...’ an evil smile lurked at the vision of another Potter causing chaos and mayhem in Hogwarts and Dumbledore sighed softly. ‘On second thoughts maybe an early retirement is in order.’ A swish of his wand altered the angle through which they viewed the

room and he studied Harry with great interest. 'Hmm. Harry that shade of white just is not your colour, My Boy.'

Harry had slid down the face of the door and stared at Tonks. There was no denying the utter shock this news gave him or the fact that he did not know how to respond. His mouth worked as though he was talking but no sound escaped him and Tonks simply glared at him, silent and waiting.

"But... But... Potions... Always used..." He was expected to say something but nothing sensible seemed to be forthcoming and so he snapped his mouth shut. 'How could she be pregnant? We always used potions every time we slept together. I don't understand. How did this happen?'

He retained enough sense to keep the thought in his private mind, away from the part of his mind that he shared with Silvenestri. The last thing he wanted to do was have to explain the biological functions that led to pregnancy to a dragon child. Surely there was someone else out there both capable and willing to explain to her the birds and the bees.

Tonks was watching him with eyes bright with emotion though there was an utter lack of expression on her face. He could not decide what he saw in her eyes but it offered him no clue as to how he should react to her announcement. He knew he was going to end up looking as warped and twisted as that tray that now emulated modern Muggle sculpture.

"I'm sorry." He whispered. "I'm sorry."

"You're sorry." Tonks hissed softly and slid from the bed. "The great Harry Potter is sorry? The Dragon Lord extraordinaire is sorry!"

She paced toward Harry and it was the slinking gliding pace of a feral cat approaching its prey but instead of pouncing on him and rending him limb from limb Tonks crouched down next to Harry and simply looked at him. Something in her eyes shifted after a moment Harry was uncertain if he should flinch, run or wait for the blow to fall.

"Do you know what happens to an Auror when she falls pregnant?"

Harry drew a deeper breath and shook his head. No, he had no idea what the repercussions for this might be considering the line of work Tonks was engaged in. In all too many ways Harry was still very ignorant of the Wizarding world.

"I'm going to be forced to take the next few years off work until the child is old enough to either go to school or to be home schooled by the father if he isn't an Auror. If he is an Auror... If he is..." Tonks shivered slightly and pushed the thought away. Harry wanted to be an Auror at one stage but now he was something else entirely.

"Tonks?" Harry whispered.

"I will be expected to be an Auror, Harry, my attention and thoughts on my job and not on my child. I... An Auror is to dedicate herself to her work, not to... It is an expensive business raising children and employing someone to do the raising for you. I have been drawing an Auror's pay for a little over a year as I only finished training last year. Because of the dedication required to be an Auror most of us only begin to think about having children after six years of careful saving. Six years of scrimping and scraping and searching for the best person to leave our children with. Someone we can dare to trust. It's a dangerous line of work and we need to make certain if the worst happens there is enough security for our children to be cared for."

Harry stared at Tonks and the tears in her eyes threatening to spill over her pale cheeks. 'Oh god the water works are going to come back if I don't do something quick. I know I don't know as much about the Wizarding world as most people but I'm not a complete bastard. How can she think I'll not help? I hate myself for making her cry but I've only just learned I'm to be... I'm to be... a... a...She's pregnant? I need to think. I'm to be a father... Do stop crying Tonks. Just give me a minute to think. I'm underage but... Yes, surely that's possible.'

Very gently and carefully in case Tonks mistook his actions and decked him he brought his arms around her and pulled her into a hug. Gently and then more firmly he rocked her and touched his lips to her head.

"Tonks you don't have to do this alone, you know. I'm here. I can support you and this child. I'm... I'm considered to be underage I

know even though I don't think of myself as being this young. I still think of myself as the age I was before I came back from the past... Oh, I know that's not relevant to this but Tonks, you are not alone in this. My parents left me more than enough money to get through school and for years after that. It's all there and it's got to be used some time."

Tonks seemed to be very still and he was uncertain if that was good or not. Finally with a sniff and knuckling a tear from her cheek she looked up at Harry. "You mean that I can use your money for our child?"

Harry sighed softly and smiled. Nodded emphatically at her and brushed hair from her face.

"It is our baby, isn't it? Ours. Yours and mine. I love you. I'm not old enough to marry in this time yet but we might as well be married with how close we are. I hope when I am considered old enough you will marry me. As far as I am concerned the gold is as much yours as it is mine besides this child is as much mine as it is yours. It's our baby and we share that responsibility."

Harry stood and offered her a hand as she got to her feet and then led her over to the bed she had been sitting on. He sighed softly as he settled there and hugged Tonks. He had the distinct feeling that he was going to get reamed for what had happened by a great many people when the word circulated.

On the other side of the doors Dumbledore cast the counter spell to dismiss the see through charm on the door and turned. Minerva had arrived and was helping Molly up from the floor and Hermione was looking wide eyed and much as he would assume someone would look who had been run over by a bus and found themselves still standing. It was not often he was treated to the sight of Hermione Granger absolutely flabbergasted. Madam Pomfrey looked satisfied and was putting the finishing touches to restoring her hair to its usual order and Silvanus was looking at Molly with a confused expression.

"But what is pregnant?" The little girl insisted.

“Excuse me.” Dumbledore drew their attention and lightly caressed the child’s silver tresses. “We are a little pushed for time at the moment Silvenestri but a full explanation will be forthcoming, I assure you. For now I want all of you to give a wizards oath not to tell anyone about this. For the moment and until we can no longer hide the fact any more. When it is obvious that Tonks is pregnant I will do what I can to keep the questions down to a minimum and I suggest you deny knowing who the father of the child is. For your safety and particularly for the child’s safety that must remain secret.”

‘Well that won’t be long.’ Hermione thought. ‘The whole school knows Harry and Tonks have been sleeping together.’

Dumbledore knew from the look on the adult’s faces that they were beginning to think of the consequences and he did not doubt it would not take long for Hermione to understand the dangers involved. ‘We can’t allow the Ministry of Magic or Voldemort to find out about this. The Minister would want the child to keep some measure of control over Harry, while Voldemort would use the child to taunt Harry and then kill it. He would have Harry in a rage when next they fight believing that would make it easier to best him and he may be right.’

Molly nodded and he knew she understood only too well the dangers that would follow this yet to be born child. Minerva was tight lipped and he doubted he had ever seen her so serious and from the expression on Hermione’s face he knew she was beginning to understand. Satisfied Dumbledore turned to Madam Pomfrey and motioned to the doors.

“For the moment list the father as unknown in your report to the Ministry. Assure her that she will not be alone and that we will be here for her. Ladies.” He inclined his head to them and made his way slowly through the wide hallways and corridors of Hogwarts. He had much to think on not the least of which was the chaos that could erupt at the birth of what might be the first Dragon Lord born in over 3000 years. And there were no Greater Dragons left other than a dragon child who had come through time.

Madam Pomfrey released the lock on the door and entered the ward with Hermione, Molly and Silvenestri. Madam Pomfrey nodded briefly

to Harry and informed Tonks she would be needed to help fill out the medical report for the Ministry and first Hermione and the Molly offered congratulations to Harry and Tonks. Molly was of a mind to scold Harry furiously about this but she knew he had been alone for so long and he had lost Sirius and so could not bring herself to take him to task. At least not at this exact moment.

‘There is always tomorrow.’ She thought.

Tonks wiped at her red eyes and Madam Pomfrey offered her a cold compress to help reduce the swelling and the Auror sighed softly, a little hitch in her breath betraying her emotional turmoil.

“Thanks all of you for being so supportive. I... I really needed that. Molly you have had seven children. Could you... could you tell me how long it will be before I can eat breakfast without throwing it up a few minutes later?” Tonks said looking at Molly while Silvenestri seated herself on Harry’s lap and Hermione settled at the foot of the bed.

Molly sighed softly and smiled at Tonks and glanced at Harry who was talking to Silvenestri in low whispers. For the moment the dragon child held his attention and she hoped he was thinking hard about explaining the birds and bees to her. That was something Molly really did not wish to have to do though she had a sneaking suspicion it just might fall to her.

“How long have you been suffering morning sickness?” From the corner of her eye she saw Silvenestri nod to Harry’s comment and then turned her attention fully to Tonks.

“Madam Pomfrey says I am two months along and I must have started my morning sickness about a week after I became pregnant so a little less than two months.” Tonks decided and then smiled when Silvenestri jumped up on to her lap and with a beaming smile lowered her head down to Tonks still flat belly.

“We are all different and morning sickness varies but I would think it should ease off any time now, though Ginny did give me an extra few weeks longer than the boys did.” Molly replied with a gentle smile as she watched what Silvenestri was doing. It brought back memories of

her pregnancies and she considered herself a grandparent to this baby and woe betide anyone who said otherwise.

Tonks nodded and hoped that Molly was right. She really hated mornings just now. Hermione, she realized was sitting quietly to one side, watching them but a little apart. "Your quite, anything wrong?"

Hermione watched as Tonks gently caressed the silver hair of the dragon child and she started as just for an instant she thought she saw a glint of light glowing in the child's eyes. Looking closer she relaxed as Silvenestri blinked innocently at her, hugging Tonks around the waist and smiling.

"Hermione?"

"Oh sorry. I was being practical and wondering what this was going to do to the trip to Norway?" Hermione leaned closer to Tonks and reached out to run her fingers through Silvenestri's hair. The child gifted her with a sleepy smile.

"It will not make a whit of difference. We still have to go and I'm still coming with you. I will be taking things easier than the rest of you, that's all." Tonks replied with a smile and turned to Harry. "Thought about what you are going to do if it's a boy or a girl?"

Watching them Molly decided that Harry was still somewhat shocked by the entire 'I'm going to be a father' thing. She was going to need to have a quiet word with both of them to make certain they understood the dangers that the baby might face after birth both from Voldemort and the Ministry though she was sure Dumbledore would speak to them. They would not be able to warn them enough about what might come.

Harry considered the question for a couple of minutes before looking up with a smile. "If it's a boy then we hope we can find a dragon Silvenestri is willing to mate with before he turns 16. He will need to establish a bond with a dragon or it is very likely that he will go rogue. Don't look so worried, Tonks. We can try to establish a bond with a lesser dragon." Harry made a face at this and everyone clearly saw that he didn't like the idea of his son having a lesser dragon as a partner. "If it's a girl she will most likely have all of your powers but

girl or boy I expect both will be able to speak Parseltongue.” He smiled at Tonks.

Tonks and Molly exchanged looks and Molly sighed. Men. That was not what Tonks had meant and Molly knew it well but she could see that Tonks was willing to accept what Harry said. Sometimes you just had to make allowances for the male of the species.

“Hermione I know it’s a bit early yet but I would like it if you would agree to be the babies Godmother when she is born?” Tonks gave Hermione a rather nervous look hoping that she would understand and agree with the request.

Hermione beamed at Tonks but before she could reply Molly sniggered and pointed at Harry who looked as though he had been eating a lemon.

“She? It’s a she? You already know it’s a girl?” Harry could not hide the fact he was hoping for a boy.

“Yes SHE. At least until she is born it’s a she not a he.” Tonks primly informed him looking rather pleased with herself and the others chuckle at the look on Harry’s face. “Hermione?”

“I would be honoured to be HER godmother.” Hermione could not resist teasing Harry but turned serious immediately after. “Who are you going to name the godfather?”

Tonks looked at Harry then at Molly and sighed. “I don’t know who would be best. Most of my old friends are either dead or are working for you-know-who.” She looked down at her lap and hugged Silvenestri tightly.

Harry’s sighed. Thus far his training had succeeded only in getting the younger members of his Host used to hearing the name without flinching but he was still working on them. He would have them saying the name without reacting fearfully eventually.

“You can say Voldemort, Tonks. There’s nothing wrong about saying the name.” Harry encouraged her gently then ducked as one of the pillow Tonks had been leaning on when it came flying at him. “What



was that for?" He summing the pillow back to his hand with the tracing of simple rune and then handed it over to Tonks.

"For saying that name, what else? You know I am still getting use to the idea of saying it. Now do you know who we should name godfather?" Tonks said putting the pillow back under her back.

"I'm not sure. There's Ron of course and Neville and I rather like Charlie. Can you imagine Hagrid if we asked him? I really have no idea but we have time to think about it. Hermione how would you like to be the only godparent to our child for the moment?"

Hermione smiled at Harry "I wouldn't mind at all but..." She sighed. Now was probably not the time but she felt that someone sometime must make the first mention of how dangerous the times were. "What happens if you both...Well..." She trailed off.

Harry sighed softly and moved around the bed to sit behind Tonks and draw her to lean against him. He slipped his arms around her and squeezed gently, knowing what it was that Hermione felt needed to be said. She was right too, he knew. It had to be considered.

'I real don't want to bring this up but they both play major rolls in this war and if they should... should both of them die what happens to the baby? If she is born before it comes to a showdown?' Hermione thought to herself quietly feeling guilt for even thinking it.

Harry reached to gently squeeze Hermione's hand and reassure her that he understood and smiled at Tonks. "You are her Godmother. I ask that you take custody of her Hermione and perhaps Mrs. Weasley would help?"

Tonks smiled at both Hermione and Molly and nodded, clearly agreeing with Harry's idea. Gently she squeezed Silvenestri's hand as the child looked up at her and nodded.

Molly nodded at the three heads that turned to her, Harry, Tonks and Hermione who looked a little frightened at the prospect of becoming a foster mother. "I would be honored to help care for the little one. I'll always be there when and if I am needed. Now then, we have plenty

of time to talk about this. Come along now. We had better go and eat. Madam Pomfrey can Tonks leave?"

All heads turned to the small office at the head of the ward where Madam Pomfrey had gone to fill out the forms the Auror's would need to add to Tonks' file. The nurse looked out of her office and nodded and waved them all toward the door and then went back to work as Harry moved around the bed to lift Silvenestri from Tonks' knee then led the way out of the hospital and toward the great hall. The little silver haired girl bounced alone happily, delighted that she would have a playmate in a few months time.

/ You will not be playing with the baby for a few years Little Miss. Human babies don't grow as you do. / Harry sent to her and Silvenestri pouted back at him. Noticing the looks and the pout everyone laughed amused by the facial expressions though no one could hear the silent fight going on between the two.

The students of Hogwarts were just taking their seats in the hall but Harry managed to secure enough seats for everyone that come with him from the hospital wing. Tonks was sat on his left, Hermione to his right and Molly was on the other side of the table with Silvenestri settled next to her. Plates were filled with much amusement as Silvenestri suddenly found a plate of raw meat before her and the dragon grinned and looked ready to dive into the bloody mess. A soft "Manners dear" from Molly saw Silvenestri scowl and with a sigh tuck into the meat using a fork. No one commented and everyone tried to look anywhere but at the sweet little girl and her plate piled high with raw meat.

The meal had barely started when Ron walked up slipped onto the seat beside Tonks. He tried to ignore his mothers enquiring look and at his discomfort Molly sighed and focused her attention on her meal, giving them some privacy.

"Mind if I join you?" He asked looking at Harry and Hermione in particular. He looked nervous but it was obvious that he wanted to sort out the mess he had made of things with Hermione and Harry.

Harry arched an eyebrow and looked pointedly at the seat Ron was sitting on. "Not at all have a seat." He grinned and the four of them

chuckled before eating a few bites and waiting for Ron to make the first move.

“Harry, Hermione. I... I wanted to say I’m sorry. I’m sorry about how I’ve behaved over the last couple of months. I’m... I’ve been... Oh I don’t bloody know how to do this. I’m sorry okay? I’d have loved to go with you guys to Norway but if you are willing I’d hope you will let me keep an eye on things down here for you while you are gone.” Ron glared furiously at his plate while he waited for one of them to speak.

Harry and Hermione exchanged glances and then grins followed by a nod from Hermione and Harry turned back to Ron. “I have been waiting for you to say something of that nature for over a month now. Forgiven but if you hurt Hermione again I will feel duty bound to hurt you, understand?”

Ron grinned something resembling the old grin no one had seen from him for months now. “Yeah. Understood. Thanks.”

“So how long before you can have your bags packed?” Harry grinned. At Ron’s startled look everyone at the table laughed. “Well? Are you coming to Norway or not?”

“I... You bet! I’d love to go.”

Towards the end of the meal Ron moved around Tonks and Harry to have a word with Hermione and he watched as his mother came around the table to take the place he had just left. “Darn. Looks like I lost my seat. Hermione, I know it was my fault what happened. I just want you to know I want to be friends and I’m sorry.”

“I want to be friends too.” Hermione returned and motioned to the vacant seat next to Silvenestri. “You can always take your mothers seat.”

Molly ignored what was going on with the others and leaned close to whisper to Tonks. “You have to eat more, dear including a wider variety of vegetables and fruits. You are eating for two now so no augments. Not a great deal more but substantially more for the little one.” She finished off her admonishment by placing a chicken leg and some carrots on the plate.

“You’re trying to make me fat.” Tonks returned with a pout before sighing and eating.

Harry shook his head and chuckled at the comment and told her in a whisper that he would love her no matter how she looked.

[illegible]

The next morning found Harry seated in the stands of the Quidditch pitch dressed in full armour and with his cloak wrapped around him. He gave a deep sigh and gazed around him at the early morning sunlight and the empty stands before looking at the red leather diary in his lap.

'She is so going to kill me. It makes no difference that she doesn't have a physical form. Somehow she is still going to kill me.'

And he hadn't had a decent breakfast yet either. Sighing he knew there was no use putting off the inevitable and indeed that could make it worse. With a shiver of dread Harry opened the book.

Staring at a blank page would not accomplish anything either he muttered and with a sigh that clearly stated he was expecting to die both quickly and horribly he picked up the quill next to him, dipped the nib in ink, gulped and wrote as quickly as he possibly could.

'Himunguesswhatyourgoingtobecomeagrandmother.'

He slammed the cover shut and groaned, hiding his face with his hands. "I'm dead, stick a fork in me for I'm done."

After a few minutes in which he gathered his courage together Harry gingerly opened the book once again just enough to see his mother's reaction was in big bold letters.

## ‘WHAT!’

‘Hmm. Well, I think she took it better than I thought she would.’ He decided. “There could have been something nasty waiting for me on the page.”

Opening the book he dipped the quill in ink once more and settled down to converse with his mother, hoping that she would listen and not inundate him with comments ranging from curses to hexes.

‘It’s true Mum, I just found out yesterday. Tonks is pregnant and I’m going to become a father.’ he paused with the quill held over the page and then sighed. He really needed to know Lily was not angry with him. ‘You are happy for me right Mum?’

He stared at the page, waiting for his mother’s words to appear and hoping that she would be happy for him. He had been alone for a long time and the more he thought of having a child of his own the more certain he was that it was the best thing that could possibly happen to him. With Tonks and their baby he would not be alone anymore. He would have a family.

‘Of course I’m happy for you dear. I was surprised though. I had thought I would have a few more years ahead of me before becoming a grandmother that’s all. How is Tonks taking the news?’ The words flowed onto the page and accompanying them was a warm and loving sensation. The feeling Harry got from the book was that his mother had accepted the news and really was happy for him.

‘She wanted to kill me at first but we are over that now. I think she loves the idea of having a baby. Say mum do you happen to know if twins runs in the family? I sort of want a boy and Tonks says it’s a girl and... I... Just so I can warn Tonks if it does end up being twins.’ Harry wrote.

A feeling of amusement came from the book and the words flowed, dancing into being quickly and neatly. ‘No twins on my side of the family, I’m afraid dear. From memory I think your father’s mother told me once that there would be the odd set of twins born every so many generations, but your grandfather was a twin so Tonks should be safe. Sorry dear, you probably will not end up with a pigeon pair. It’s probably just as well considering you were a bit difficult to convince it was a good thing to be born. Then again most Potter’s require a bit of an effort to give birth to or so James said after I had you. I hate to think what Tonks would be like having two Potters at once. You might have to run and hide out for a bit.’

He grinned at the book and wrote quickly. 'Thanks for the warning. I better get going. Silvenestri is going for her first flight since her wing was wounded a couple of months ago. Don't worry, I'll come back later and tell you everything that's happened. Talk to you soon, ok mum?' Harry waited just long enough to see Lilly's 'Okay. I had better hear from you soon young man.' appear on the page before he shut the book.

For a few minutes he had been aware of the sound of voices drawing nearer and he knew the Dragon Host was arriving to witness Silvenestri's return to the air but when he looked up from the diary he stared and then chuckled. Streaming down toward the Quidditch pitch was what seemed like most of the school, students and professors included. As he watched the stands began to fill and with a sigh Harry got to his feet and descended the stand and walked across the grounds to where Silvenestri and the Host were walking. The little girl walked with a happy spring in her step and a beaming smile.

"It's nice to see you're looking forward to your maiden flight, Silvenestri." Harry said to the little girl at his side and looked around. Seeing Tonks approaching he headed across the field and greeted her with a quick kiss on the cheek.

"Of course I'm looking forward to it. Two months I've been stuck on the ground. I still can't believe you made me stay grounded for that long." Silvenestri huffed and the gathering members of the Dragon Host laughed at how the little girl poked her tongue at him.

"We needed to make sure your wings had healed. No sense in damaging you even more because of impatience. Well then, first things first. Lets go over into the middle of the field and you can change forms. I'll have a look at those wing joins and check out the other injuries and then and only then will I decide if you can fly or not." Harry said.

Silvenestri ignored the filling stands and marked out into the centre of the pitch and in front of everyone transformed. A concerted 'Aaahhhh!' swept the stadium.

Albus from his place in the Professors box had to admit that Silvenestri looked much better. Gone was the dragon that was grey

with fatigue and bloody, battered and burned. This gleaming silver creature before him looked glorious in the morning sun.

‘It will be good to see her in flight without fighting.’ He thought. ‘She will be very graceful. She has a neat little body and good breadth of wing. Not much in the way of scars now. That’s pleasing to see.’

Harry walked up to the now fully healed Silver Dragon and began a detailed examination of the wing joints and other areas that had been severely burned and then proceeded to examine the places where the dragons claws had gouged in the fight.

“Hmmm everything looks alright, but I don’t want you in the air for long. Do you hear me, Young Lady? Twice around the stadium so I can judge flexibility in the wings and if I signal you its okay you can fly longer. An hour max. No more until we build up your stamina.”

Silvenestri arched her neck, looking over her shoulder at Harry and gave a short snort before she hopped in a comical manner to gain some distance from him before she unfolded her wings to their full length. Harry watched critically as the dragon’s legs bent and tensed and her wings quivered with expectation and then she leapt in a mighty heave to ensure she had enough clear air for the all important down stroke of her wings.

“Ooooooohhh! Aaaahhhhhhhhhhhhh!” The sighs resounded around the Quidditch pitch as the dragon beat steadily higher until she was above the pitch and then circling and every head was straining to keep her in sight as she circled.

/ Hey don’t go too far. Let me check first. / Harry sent to her via their link as he walked over to Tonks’ and enfolded her into a hug, settling with her held to his side and she rested her head on his shoulder.

Tonks smiled widely as she watched the beauty of the Silver Dragons flight and she could see how carefree and happy the dragon was to be airborne again. Silvenestri bellowed, her head held high but she circled, coming in low over the pitch and snaked her head around at Harry before beating strongly to gain height again.





evening. The rest of you, enjoy the remainder of the feast, go about your work and studies and good night." He left the hall a few minutes later and Minerva followed him.

Harry and Tonks exchanged looks but could only shrug as neither had any idea what the Professor could want with them. Both were well aware that they had been receiving pointed looks from many of the students. Some of the girls were positively glaring at Tonks and the way Harry treated her and some of the boys were scowling at Harry for much the same reason. Both knew that their relationship was far from secret after the morning and both had shrugged off the looks but they hoped things would settle down in a day or two.

"You know some times I feel like ripping their heads off for looking at us like that. Then I remember that that is the Dragon Lord side of me talking and not my more human side." Harry whispered to Tonks as they left the Great Hall as he wrapped an arm around Tonks' shoulders.

Professor Lupin's project had shown him why Dragon Lords were so feared by the modern day wizard and he was determined not to fall to the draconic anger that had overcome so many of the old Lords.

"Join the club. So, do Dragon Lord's lovers get to share those tendencies or is it just me?" Tonks smiled at the suddenly serious look on Harry's face as he tried to remember what he had been told about Dragon Lords and their mates. "Joking, Silly."

It was not a long walk to Dumbledore's office and on entering they found Minerva and Dumbledore sipping freshly brewed tea.

"Now Harry. Minerva and I have been wondering what you two have planned to do about this trip to Norway and the child? We need to modify arrangements where necessary. Sit down, sit down." Dumbledore offered them all a sherbet lemon.

Harry looked at Minerva who poured tea for them and then at Tonks who nodded encouragingly before answering. "No need to make too many changes. We need to add Ron to the team and that will be just about all that needs changing."

Dumbledore looked to Tonks who nodded her agreement. "I am aware that I need to be more careful than I usually am and we should be back long before the baby is any where near due."

"Very well. Harry might I recommend that before you leave you have your account at Gringotts made accessible by Tonks in the event that something happen to you? It is always best to think worst case scenario and be pleasantly surprised when nothing untoward eventuates. Tonks will have much less trouble if all of this is seen to before your trip."

Harry nodded. "Yes, Professor, I should have thought of that."

At Harry's request Dumbledore produced paper and quill and Harry wrote a note to the management at the wizard bank informing the goblins there that Tonks was to have access to his vault and to send him another key as soon as possible. Dumbledore sealed the letter and promised to have it delivered the next day.

After discussing the journey to Norway in greater detail Harry noted Tonks yawn and discovered that he was feeling tired himself. It was getting late and he sighed softly, meeting Dumbledore's gaze. "Is that all for the moment, Professor? I have a test tomorrow."

Dumbledore nodded, wished them both a good nights sleep and watch as there left. Minerva said her own goodbyes not long after and Dumbledore found himself alone in his office, the paintings of the former headmasters snoring softly in the background.

"I hope they are successful on this job for all our sakes." He said to the empty room.

In a room a below Dumbledore's office Rowena stood within her mirror room. She had been watching the meeting in the office and lingered after Harry and Tonks had departed. Hearing the Headmasters words she nodded and waved her hand at the mirror nearest her. A landscape made up of a massive ice burg surrounded by smaller drifting plates of ice was revealed to her. More and more ice was revealed as the picture moved until it looked like she looked upon an ice forest.

“But will they be able to get the city back?” She sighed watching the waves being whipped up by a rising wind come crashing into the cliff face.

[illegible]

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## Chapter 21: Trains and Boats.

/ Telepathic /

21 June 1997 10:00 AM A.D

Time could do many strange things but one thing it would not do was stop. It marched inexorably onward, indefatigable and with its measured beat the preparations for the journey to seek the Ice Cliff City progressed. The day finally arrived where Harry and his team would leave England and catch a boat to Norway and to the city of Oslo. Their travel arrangements required that on arrival in Oslo they would arrange transportation to the far north of Norway and from there they would seek the city lost in antiquity.

The first section of their journey called for a train ride and Harry settled into his compartment gently drawing Tonks to sit on his lap and together they watched the countryside rolling past them. Tonks was now starting to show she was with child even with the loose robes but word of her pregnancy had been kept quiet and only those already in the know could see she was pregnant. As a precaution for their trip Harry had worked a few carefully devised runes of concealment and deception to turn the eye away from the gentle swelling of her body. Tonks was quite happy to settle on his lap and spend some time watching the scenery flash past and play with a few strands of his hair.

Seated across from them in the carriage was Ron, Mrs. Weasley and Ginny, all sharing the seat while Silvestri and Hermione were seated on the same seat as he and Tonks. Mrs. Weasley was concentrating on directing her knitting needles to follow the pattern while Ron stared out of the window and Ginny seemed to be napping. Minerva and Hagrid were elsewhere on the train keeping an attentive eye on all of the other students who were heading home for the summer holidays.

The click clack of the knitting needles blended comfortably with the swaying of the carriage and the rhythmic rumbling of the wheels over the tracks. It was a quiet and peaceful moment that felt oddly homey to Harry and he nuzzled Tonks' hair thinking of their arrival in London.

Mr. and Mrs. Granger would meet them at Kings Cross Station with the cars to take them to the docks to board the ship. In the morning the ship would sail for Oslo and Harry knew that Hermione's parents were delighted to have the chance to be with their daughter and their friends and take the cruise to Oslo and beyond. Hermione had delighted in their letters exchanged while travel arrangements were finalized.

Tonks was looking down at her belly and sighed at the lingering queasiness of morning sickness. "Harry, I'm glad I'm having a child and all that but I really have to wonder why I have to put up with all the trouble that goes with it?" She sighed looking at Harry while everyone else in the carriage chuckled.

Harry sighed. Tonks had said that rather a lot lately and he almost wished he was some kind of God to make her feel better even for a few minutes. Some of the students might consider him to be some sort of divine being going up against Voldemort as he had for the past few years but he knew how far from being God like he was. Still, it would have been nice to help Tonks feel better at the flick of a wrist. It would at least have given him some peace from listening to the continued complaint about the changes taking place to her body.

"I don't know why but if you like the next time I see Mother Nature I'll take her to task and ask her why the female of the species carries the baby...ouch!" He jumped and rubbed at his head where Tonks had quite neatly backhanded him to the laughter of the other carriage occupants. "What was that for?" He stared wide eyed at Tonks still sitting in his lap.

"That was for being such a smart ass." Tonks sniffed at him, slipped off his knee and went to the carriage door, looking back at Harry and stuck her tongue out at him. "Since you are my smart ass, and a damn sexy one at that I suppose I'll have to forgive you." With a flick of her hair she slipped out of the carriage and made her way to the bathroom.

Harry grinned evilly and blew her back a kiss. Mrs. Weasley shook her head slowly, watching the byplay with obvious enjoyment and

knowing Harry would be thinking up ways to even the score for that clip around the ears Tonks had given him.

Molly looked at Harry with a small smile of sympathy "If it makes you feel any better, dear, I was twice as hard on Arthur while I was pregnant with any of the kids. The one who was really hard on the father though was your mother. She was just impossible to deal with and ran James ragged."

"Mum!" Ron looked shocked and Ginny was staring at her mother with wide eyes. Both looked scandalized.

"Well, you don't think we have to bare the discomfort of hyperactive hormones in silence do you? If we suffer its only fair and just to make the other half cringe a bit." Molly beamed at her children. "You remember that in the future Ginny."

Harry smiled at her. "Well then, let's hope that Tonks and I stop having kids before we reach seven. I'm not sure if I can survive that many." He grinned at the thought of a half dozen little versions of himself and Tonks running around the place. 'Not bad images but if we have boys could I convince Silvenestri to mate with that many lesser dragon?' he thought to himself careful not to allow the thought to leak to Silvenestri.

"I heard that Harry! You are not having any more than three children if I have anything to say about it." Tonks slid the door shut behind her, her hair now a light red in colour and her eyes reflecting her natural grey with flecks of Harry's green.

Harry smiled. "I can live with that but can you?" He looked Tonks up and down appreciating her new look. "Are you trying to find out what she's going to look like before her morphing powers kick in?" He asked with a cautious smile. He was learning to be wary of sudden mood shifts.

"Yes, I am. Just think Harry, if they are all girls they can gang up on their father and make sure he doesn't get their poor mother pregnant again." Tonks smirked then settled back down in Harry's lap her fingers immediately playing with his hair. She hoped that if the baby was a boy he would have his father's hair.

Harry gasped in mock despair. "Well all I can do is hope for a boy. After all I will need someone to scold who can't make with the puppy dog eyes at will."

Ron choked back a chuckle and turned to watch the countryside out of the window, Silvenestri grinned and settled for a nap and Hermione and Ginny watched as Tonks and Harry continued to banter about their future children. With a contented sigh Molly flicked her gaze over her knitting and decided she was ready to shape the knitting for the arms of the baby's singlet.

A few hours later Molly sighed again and proceeded to wake the young people all of whom had fallen asleep. The train was coming into the station after so many long hours that had been taken up with light hearted banter, Hermione reading a book, Ginny had for some time worked at learning to knit, wanting to knit something for the baby and games of chess between Silvenestri and Ron. The dragon child and Ron were surprisingly evenly matched most of the time but Silvenestri somehow managed to win most of the games. There was usually an evil smile on her face when Ron would pull out his so called secret moves and the little Dragon would counter most of them with ease. Molly had enjoyed the trip and by its conclusion when the others had napped she had finished a baby's singlet, two sets of booties and was midway through the jacket of the layette.

With much stretching of cramped limbs and grumbling about the length of the trip they sorted themselves out and made their way off the train to the platform. Fighting their way through the usual crowd of excited students greeting their parents they made their way to where Minerva stood at the magical gateway to London and she explained to them that Hagrid had gone through already to make sure the Grangers were there. She told Harry that Hagrid was also checking to see if his uncle was there as in all the general excitement and preparations they had forgot to write him to say he need not collect Harry.

After locating the luggage from the rear of the train and gathering around the Professor and Molly they excitedly talked about the forthcoming sea voyage until Minerva called them to order, doing a quick headcount.

“Are we all here?” Minerva asked and when satisfied with her headcount and the chorus of ‘yes’ she led them to the gate. “No more than three in a group and two would be best.” She instructed motioning to the gate. “Do try not to attract attention.”

Harry and Tonks lingered with Minerva as first Molly and Silvenestri and then Ron, Ginny and Hermione crossed through the gate. Harry had the uncomfortable feeling that his uncle was waiting for him on the other side and that there was going to be a scene made. With a nod from Minerva Tonks squeezed his hand and then they were plunging through the gate. With a sigh and a last glance around the platform Minerva walked through into the world of the Muggles.

King’s Cross Station was as busy as ever, Muggles going back and forth ignoring everyone intent on their business and occasionally the odd witch or wizard would be noted only to vanish as they slipped through the magical gate to the hidden platform and train station. For a moment Harry allowed himself to absorb the busy normality of the Muggle world and then Tonks stiffened at his side and he could feel the tension in her.

Looking around he watched as his Uncle scowled at the people around them, no doubt afraid that someone might have noticed the insane and weird wizards and witches moving through them. Near Uncle Vernon stood Hagrid, towering over Mr. and Mrs. Granger who waved excitedly at Hermione who was hurrying toward them.

“Great.” Harry muttered and led the way to his uncle and the Grangers and Tonks squeezed his hand and kept by his side.

“Hello Uncle Vernon.” Harry greeted, trying to keep his dislike for the man out of his voice. He very gently moved Tonks to stand just behind him and Silvenestri moved to stand beside him and both Tonks and the dragon child glared venomous dislike at the pudgy man.

“Come on boy. I have no time for this. I have work for you to do at home.” Vernon said and made a grab for Harry but Silvenestri stepped between the two and everyone heard her teeth snap together as she restrained herself at the last moment from biting his hand.



“What...!” Vernon glared at the child and look at Harry. “Come on boy. I don’t have all day.”

/ Silvenestri, My Dear, don’t bite that. You don’t have any idea were it’s been. / Harry glanced at Silvenestri and received a quick mental image of his Uncle hanging from a very draconic jaw. / You will get indigestion so don’t even think it. /

The dragon child glared at him intently for a moment and everyone close to them clearly heard a very deep rumbling growl. Unaware what was going on Vernon looked around the platform trying to determine what that sound was and where it was coming from.

Harry rested a hand on her silver head for a moment, stroking lightly to sooth her and then forced a smile as he looked at this uncle. “Sorry Uncle Vernon, but I’m not going with you to Number 4. I’m going away this summer.”

Vernon’s eyes widened. Harry wondered briefly if it was in glee or sudden fear that he was going to be asked to pay for the trip.

“A trip? A school trip? Where are you going? How long will you be away? When are you leaving and where are you leaving from?”

“I’m going overseas, to Oslo.” Harry kept his voice low mindful of so many people moving around near them and not wanting his travel plans bandied about London. Voldemort had spies everywhere and you never knew whose ears were listening.

“WHAT! Oslo, Norway?” the name and country came out as a shocked hiss that thankfully did not carry far. “You are not. I’m not paying for you to go anywhere! You get your backside out to the car and hurry up. I have more to do than stand here arguing with you about foolishness.”

“I am going on the trip Uncle, its all arranged. You don’t have to worry about paying for anything as it’s already paid for. My headmaster arranged everything. You have met Professor Dumbledore, I believe?” Not waiting for Vernon to say anything Harry grasped Silvenestri’s hand and Tonks’ and started to walk toward the group gathered about the Grangers.

Vernon made another swipe at Harry and grasped his left arm and found him self to be the target of every eye there. Harry snarled softly, forced himself to be calm and turned back to his uncle.

“Go back to your nice normal Muggle life and forget you ever heard the name Harry Potter, Uncle. You don’t need to be involved in this anymore. Forget all about me and let us all get on with our lives.”

Harry led Tonks and Silvenestri away from his Uncle and tried not to see the moment of satisfaction that appeared on Vernon’s face. No doubt he was only too happy to be told he could forget about Harry Potter and all of the weirdness that came with knowing him. It still hurt though, Harry thought. His aunt was the only living relative he had because of that he was bound and determined not to tell his uncle what he really thought of him. Maybe someday they would meet again with less antagonism but not now. Now he wanted only to be with his new family, Tonks and Silvenestri and his friends who were waiting for them.

Minerva glided between Harry and Vernon and Hagrid imposed his bulk between the Professor and Harry’s group and some part of Harry registered the sound of Minerva’s voice but not the words. Vernon did not again try to force Harry to the car and when he looked the man had gone. With a relieved sigh Harry walked up to Mrs. Granger and smiled.

“It’s nice to see you again, Mrs. Granger.” He offered a hand to her.

Holly Granger smiled at Harry and bypassing the offered hand shake she enfolded him in a quick hug. “Call me Holly, Harry. You remember Arutha?” Mr. Granger nodded and shook Harry’s hand. Holly beamed at him. “I would like to thank you for looking after our daughter so well over the years and for being one her first real friends.” She let Harry go and turned to Tonks and looked her up and down tilting her head to one side. “We’ve not met, I think.”

Tonks smiled at Holly and blushed. “Hello. I’m Nymphadora Tonks but please call me Tonks. It’s nice to meet you, Mrs. Granger.” She said offering a hand to her.

Holly positively beamed at Tonks. "Nymphadora? What a lovely name." At the shocked look on Tonks' face Holly laughed softly. "Very well, Tonks it is."

Hermione's mother impulsively hugged Tonks and her eyes widened at the feel of what her eyes had not seen. Stepping back she looked long and hard at Tonks and seeing just an ordinary young woman, slender and rather pretty she stepped closer and lightly placed a hand on her middle, feeling the gentle swell of the baby.

"Oh my. Please call me Holly, dear. Who is the father? Should you be traveling? It's a long way to travel for a woman in your condition."

Mr. Granger hustled everyone out of the station, ignoring the look his wife directed at him. He smiled at Tonks and brought them to the cars where the Weasley's were packing their trunks into one magically enhanced boot. To Harry's surprise Minerva slipped behind the wheel of one car, imperiously motioned Molly, Ginny and Ron to climb in and started up the vehicle. At Harry's look Minerva smirked and promptly drove out of the parking lot.

Hagrid chuckled at Harry's look and somehow squeezed his bulk through the door of a second car which somehow seemed to reduce his bulk enough for him to fit in and though the car did lower from his weight it never actually quite broke the suspension. Harry decided there was some pretty powerful magic strengthening that car. Mr. Granger arched an eyebrow, winked at his wife and climbed into the driver's seat, driving away after a moment.

Holly motioned to Tonks to take the front seat and for Harry, Hermione and Silvenestri to climb in the back. In a few seconds they were off into the heavy London traffic and bound for the port district.

"My dear, should you be considering a lengthy journey in your condition and shouldn't the baby's father be here to support you?"

"I can still travel for a few months Holly and the baby's father is in the back seat now." Tonks looked over her shoulder at Harry who was seated in the middle with Silvenestri on his left and Hermione on the right.

Holly glanced over her shoulder and looked right at Harry who blushed and looked down at his feet. Holly arched an eyebrow and glanced quickly at the road. "Harry, aren't you a little young to be a father?" Holly tried not to sound angry as it was obvious Harry knew what he had done. Holly only hoped that Harry intended to stay with Tonks and make sure she and the baby would be well looked after.

"Well it's really a long story and in this time frame, yes, I am a little young to be a father but in the time where I received my training, no, I'm not." Harry met Holly's gaze as she looked back at him again, hoping that she would be happy with that answer.

Holly looked back to the road trying to puzzle out his reply. 'In this time?' What was that supposed to mean?

Tonks spoke in Harry's defensive. "I was also involved in this, Holly. When I found out I was pregnant I tried to kill Harry... well at least severely injure him. Just ask Hermione, she was there. Now that I've passed the shock I love the thought of having a child before Vold... Before you-know-who attacks the Wizarding world."

In the back seat and unseen by Tonks or Holly Harry frowned at that reference to Voldemort. He had hoped to have his core group unafraid to speak that hated and feared name but he still had not succeeded. Determined to eventually succeed he sighed softly. There was still time and it was a long way to Ice Cliff.

Holly nodded accepting Tonks' assurance and after negotiating a corner, avoiding two cars whose drivers seemed to be involved in an argument on the wrong side of the road she asked Hermione to tell her about this attack on Harry. Hermione and Silvanus, to both Harry and Tonks' embarrassment took great delight in embellishing the story for Holly's amusement and it lasted the length of the drive to the docks. By the time they parked the car everyone in the vehicle was laughing merrily.

The dock area was surprisingly quiet and mist free when they arrived and they found Hagrid waiting for them and he escorted them to the small hotel carrying most of the bags from the back of their car. Harry carried the rest and they quickly made their way into the hotel, Harry eager to get himself out of the public eye on the off chance that

Voldemort had eyes in the vicinity who would report his presence to the Dark Lord.

In the lobby they found Mr. Granger talking to the man behind the check-in desk and making arrangements for a five o'clock wake up call the next morning. Minerva was checking a list and handing out room keys.

"Hi, Honey. Everything is all ready. The boys will be staying in one room with Hagrid next door. Molly and Minerva will be sharing a room with Silvenestri and Ginny and that leaves you and I to share a room with Tonks, if that is okay." He looked to Tonks for her approval.

Tonks nodded and smiled at Harry then looked to Holly and her husband. "It's okay with me if you can put up with me being up through the night to raid the service fridge." She agreed and then flinched, pressing a hand lightly to her belly as the baby moved. "Damn Harry, this has got to be a girl. A boy would listen to his mother when she asks him to settle down." She said to Harry.

Arutha Granger looked at her apparently flat middle, his wife whispered "Magical concealment, dear" and then turned around looking for Harry, who stepped out from behind Hagrid's bulk and lightly stroked Tonks' hand.

"Not true Tonks." Harry stepped away from Hagrid and placed his arm around her waist. "Professor Lupin told me I was a nightmare to my mother and that dad had to sleep on the couch downstairs most of the time when I decided it was play time. Between her mood swings and having her insides used as a punching bag she made pretty sure he never would get a good nights sleep if she couldn't. Mum confirmed it just the other day."

He caught the look in Mr. Granger's eye and knew there was a talk about getting your girlfriend pregnant on the way and ducked around behind Hagrid again only to have Mr. Granger follow. "Oh geese, could some one tell him I am giving all my money to raising the child please." He fled from behind Hagrid to take shelter behind Holly who took pity on him and walked her husband to the elevators and talked to him quietly as they rode the lift up.

Tonks walked with Harry as they left the elevator and as a group, Holly and Arutha bringing up the rear they headed for their rooms. They had an early morning to catch the ship and no one wanted to be late. Tonks and Harry said their goodnights and entered their respective rooms thankful that the others in their group had given them a bit of privacy.

Nearly two hours later Harry was still awake though Ron and Hagrid were sound asleep and competing for who could snore the loudest. He thought it might be interesting to see if anyone on the floor with them was going to be able to sleep this night. With a sigh he settled near the window and pulled out Lily's diary and started to write.

'Hi Mum. We start out tomorrow morning to search for Ice Cliff.' He thought for a moment and smiled. 'I thought you would like to know that Tonks is planning on killing me after we have our third child just to make sure she doesn't have any more.' He sat back from the diary and watched the ink vanish into the page.

Words began to flow across the page and he sensed a good degree of humor. 'It's nice to hear that she has reached that stage. Don't worry to much, Honey. I'm quite sure she will want you to help in making as many babies as she wants and then she will teach you the meaning of the words 'Not tonight dear'. I know I did with your father. It generally takes only a few blows with the rolling pin before the message gets across.'

Harry sniggered quietly though with all the snoring going on he was doubtful anyone could hear him. 'Well I wouldn't mind a few kids, mum, just not a lot. I don't think I could keep up with more than three.'

The ink absorbed into the page and after a moment more words flowed into existence.

'You never know, dear. You generally find that you have the energy to cope when you need to and you don't notice how much energy it takes to love your babies and keep them safe. If you have an early start in the morning you should get some sleep. I'll talk to you when you wake up or when you are settled on the boat.'

Harry snorted and bent over the diary. 'I don't know if I'm going to get any sleep at all. You should hear Hagrid and Ron snoring. I've never heard anything like it before.'

'Ah, you never heard your father either. Stuff your ears honey or cast a deafness spell on yourself or better yet a mute spell on your friends so that everyone around you can enjoy a peaceful nights sleep. Good night, Harry.'

Harry had the distinct feeling that he had just been hugged, as though her warm arms had enfolded him for a timeless moment and he sighed, setting pen to paper again.

'Thanks for the suggestion. I think I'll do just that. Good night mum and thank you.'

Gently he closed the diary and slipped it safely away, looking at his sleeping friends he sighed. How was anyone supposed to sleep with that going on? Before he could take action there was a tap on the door and curious he moved to open the door and found Professor McGonagall standing there, frowning.

Minerva nodded briskly at him. "Good evening, Mr. Potter. Excuse me, please." The professor strode past him, pointed her wand at the two engaged in their snoring contest and with a flick of the wand commanded them to be silent. A brief flash of light lit the room and the Professor nodded, satisfied at the instant silence that followed in its wake.

Returning to the door she nodded to Harry and swept past him. "Good evening, Mr. Potter."

Grinning like an idiot Harry looked from his blissfully unaware friends to the professor striding back to her room and found Tonks, Holly, Arutha, Hermione, Ginny and Molly clustered in the hallway with looks of utter relief and admiration focused on the Professor.

"Thank you, Minerva." Molly sighed. "I thought Arthur was bad but Hagrid... Off to bed, people. There's an early start in the morning."

With a smile Harry closed and locked the door and crawled into bed. Settling himself he composed his thoughts as he had been taught in days long gone and fell asleep, thankful of his mercenary days. He quickly slipped into a dream that for once did not include Tonks and himself and a nice little cottage in the middle of nowhere that lately had included the laughter of children.

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Harry stood enveloped within a silver mist. The mist swirled and eddied around him and in each eddy of swirling vapor he caught a glimpse of a memory. He found himself watching himself as a child hide from Dudley and the day he had first met Hagrid. He watched himself make friends with Ron and Hermione and in quick succession in swirl after swirl he watched the past. Pictures he recognized thought here was no sound and he glimpsed the time, not so long ago when he found out he was to be a father. Pictures with no sound, dream and yet not a dream.

He was aware that this was not a dream and he had felt something similar to this before but before he had not possessed the training of a Dragon Lord and he had been helpless against the flow,

“Why don’t you come out Voldemort? You’re not going to find what you are looking for without my cooperation.” He sent the thought out into the silver mist and pulled his shields around him tightening and strengthening them and feeling Voldemort pulling back, retreating from the contact.

Around him the mist swirled, changed and solidified into a vast gorge and wild landscape. Harry stood on the eastern edge of the gorge, a rich forest growing behind him and lush grass growing around his feet. He stood clad in his armour and cloak but his sword was absent and he knew he would not be needing it here.

On the far side of the gorge was a waste land, dead and filled with a terrible miasma. The once vibrant forest now stood lifeless, skeletal trees reaching dead branches into the clouded air. The poison in the air was difficult to see but he knew it was there and that it would kill any living thing that chanced to find its way into the once healthy forest. The source of the miasma stood on the bank of the gorge,



opposite Harry, his evil radiating from him, his black and red robes blowing in the wind he created around him.

Harry sensed the wind sent to surround him and encircle him in the deadly vapor and created his own wind, swirling it around him, whipping his cloak around him and directed the deadly gas back to the Dark Lord.

"It's been a while Tom. What have you been doing lately?" Harry looked Voldemort in the eyes a small smile curving his lips and defiance lighting his eyes, daring Voldemort to stop him from using his real name.

"For someone who is as an ant to me, you are calm Potter. I grew bored and seek entertainment. The nights I have found to be a disappointment to me and have decided making your nights a living hell. Suitable payback for the trouble you have caused me, Potter and I find it amusing to bother you. Does it not amuse you too?" His voice was a sibilant hiss, the signature snake like voice Harry knew all too well.

"I find it amusing that you believe you can enter my mind and read my memories and perhaps my plans. Go ahead. Try to force your way in."

Harry stood a little straighter and looked calmly at the Dark Lord, feeling the Dragon Lord within him rising up to the challenge, eager for the contest but the side that was Harry urged caution and restraint. He was almost surprised that the Dragon Lord within listened.

Voldemort hissed a sound that Harry assumed was meant to be a laugh and closed his eyes reaching out his mind toward Harry. In this mental world a bridge representing the Dark Lords thoughts began to form before him and grow swiftly across the breadth of the gorge. The snake like Lord stretched his thin lips into a smirk that turned quickly into a scowl as the bridge stopped mid way across the gap. A moment or two of struggling and the bridge began to fall apart.

Voldemort hissed his eyes opening and he glared at Harry with hate a flame burning in their dark depths. "How do you resist me, Potter? I am

the most powerful wizard to ever live and you somehow manage to resist me. How is this possible?"

Harry smiled. "You have never been the most powerful, merely the Darkest. Were you the most powerful you would fear no one and I know you fear Dumbledore. He's not the only one you need to fear, Tom. I think perhaps you might be the third most powerful wizard in the Wizarding world."

Voldemort hissed like a boiling kettle. "I am Voldemort, the Dark Lord and your superior in every way. I am Voldemort, the most powerful wizard to ever walk the earth."

Harry watched as the last traces of the bridge dissolved into thin air. "Some all powerful dark wizard you are. You can't even get into a sixteen year olds mind." Harry baiting Voldemort hoping to make him lose his temper that he might learn how much stronger he needed to be assured of victory when they met face to face.

"I AM THE MOST POWERFUL WIZARD IN THE WORLD!" Voldemort's hissed scream was laced with power that knocked Harry back more than a foot from the blast.

"Now that's the power of a true wizard." Harry commented, returning to his former place. "It's too bad you have to lose your temper to show some true power." Harry considered the Dark Lord for a moment. 'He is not all that far from the power I sense in Albus but I believe I will wait for a time before I go head to head with him. He is cunning enough to have many tricks up his sleeve and there are his followers to be considered. No, I believe it is not the right time to finish off the Dark Lord. I have to be one hundred percent certain of victory. After all the hunt is so much more fun than the kill.'

Voldemort glared at the gorge and a new bridge began to form and Harry watched it, sending out his shield and seeking to dismantle it. Voldemort succeeded this time in making it three quarters of the way across the gap before Harry's defenses ripped the bridge apart.

"Damn you, Potter, I'll find a way into your mind and when I do I will rip you apart and find the knowledge that has enabled you to become so strong. I will find that secret and I will add it to my skills and I will

learn how you commanded a dragon without being in its presence all the time.”

Harry smiled and looked at Voldemort with as much interest as he would were he studying an ant. "Some day you might but not tonight. Until that day, know that I am your better."

Harry straightened to his full height and pulled his power to him gathering it ready for release and held up his hand. He felt the Dragon Lord within him surge with reckless disregard for how much information he would reveal to the Dark Lord and desperately tried to contain the blast as the Dragon Lord within snarled and released the surge.

“With my regards, Dark Lord, get out of my mind. You offend me.”

He grasped at the power flow, bleeding off some of the charge desperately trying to hide his full strength from the Dark Lord. The huge blast of raw magic surged across the gulf of the gorge at Voldemort and knocked him out of Harry's mind.

[illegible]

In a dark and cold cottage hidden in a desolate landscape the Dark Lord was hurled across the room of his hide out. Snarling, the man who had once been known as Tom Riddle pulled himself to his feet and considered this unexpected turn of events.

[illegible]

In a small hotel in London Harry opened his eyes. He could not help the small smile that crossed his face as he slipped out of bed and walked to the window to look out over the fog-choked harbour. He had succeeded in pulling the power of the Dragon Lord and subjugating him once again but it had not been easier, in truth it was more difficult. He had learned so much of why the legends said the Dragon Lords were to be feared and he did not intend to become like those long dead men who had in so many cases had forgotten their own humanity.

“I will remain me but mark me well, Tom Riddle. That was just a taste of what I can do and by the time I get back with my friends I well be the most powerful being to walk this planet in over two thousand years.”

Harry sighed and quieted the Dragon Lords pride. He would need to be careful or fall into the same trap as Tom Riddle before him. He did not wish to replace the cruelty and power of Voldemort with one just as bad in the shape of an out of control Dragon Lord.

Hagrid and Ron slept on in the night, oblivious to the slender young man standing by the window desperately trying to think of how to hold on to his humanity and waiting for the 5 o'clock wake up call. He was waiting for the next step that would take him into gaining a safe world for the future of his children and the children of the Wizarding world.

[illegible]

The end for now.

Stand on a stage main light centered on Damon Blade dressed in a suit, "Until next time people, enjoy this first part in Dragon Lords." Walk off stage before rocks can be thrown at me, "Now play nice until I can post the next part."

[illegible]

Thanks to the follow reviews:

Pwn Master Paladin, Rainbow Phoenix, Dagger1211, XFate, taxzombie, princessella55, The-Resident, wilorf, Rocky235, Wytil, Silverscale, Killer916, AzureSky123, Junky, Sheepdog, Blue Werewolf Boy, athenakitty, old-crow.

Ok this is not a real chapter of Rise of the Dragon Lords but the work in progress time line for the fic.

Now I have revived e-mails reviews and many other things in my in box sense the last chapter of this fic and I have this much to say... PEOPLE I AM WORKING ON PART TWO... now then it is being worked on but I'm also working on Dark Allies two as well as part two of this one and that is only just started the second chapter so please I'm asking you to give me time as I do have other things like school and job hunting to do, I promise there well be a part two but if you want as good as work as part one then give me time.

I do enjoy hearing from many of you but I need time people so please easy off a little on the demands.

Thank you Damon Blade

Time line

12,000 BC The Elvan Empire starts to form and the once sperate cites form one empire in the middle east of today many of there cites close to the coast having control of the red sea.

12,900 BC The first Elvan Emperor is named and the move to the north into the heart lands are made

10,000 BC The Ice age hit and sea levels raised flooding and sinking some of the out laying cites and forcing the humans of the lands to move closer to there boarders starting up little boarder conflicts.

9,000 BC The Elvan Empire pushes into Europe after taking control of most of Asia and starts to build new cites along the coast after the seas had stopped rising.

6,000 BC The Elves have control of all of the known lands of Europe Asia and Africa and have build the cite of Ice Cliff on the Norwegians coast also making a deal with the last of the Greater gold Dragons to let them hunt on there planes in return for keeping the peace.

5,800 BC The Elves move there capital to the island city of Atlantic by order of the tenth Empire.

5,500 BC Ice Cliff vanishes of the Elvan maps and the first signs of a human power are spotted from the Asia Mountains claiming that they are the new rulers.

5,000 BC The Dragon Lords move out of the mountains and take control of some of the Elvan out posts in the area starting up little wars between the forces.

4,100 BC The current Emperor of the Elves orders the attack on the Dragon Lords and their human followers for the attack and taking of one of the cities in China.

3,800 BC The lost city of Ice Cliff is found by an Elvan scouting party and the Forgotten are named and made the first independent city within the Elvan Empire.

3,726 BC An earthquake hits the coast of Africa and the island city of Atlantis the Elvan capital is sent to the bottom of the sea the Elvan Empire starts to lose the war to the Dragon Lords for the first time.

3,501 BC Dragon Lords make contact with the Forgotten and the treaty is formed between the two people and the Elvan Empire is pushed back to the far southern tip of Africa.

3,000 BC The Dragon Lords launch the final attack on the Elves and their last strong hold.

2,990 BC The Elves are wiped out and the Dragon Lords assume control of the world's magical nations but quickly hand control over to the leaders of the said nations.

1,530 BC The Dragon Lord Adinirahc is born in England Scout Land.

1,500 BC Adinirahc bonds with his Copper dragon and takes control of one of the forests of Scout Land.

1,000 BC Rumours of a nation or cult that wishes to separate the two worlds of magical and Muggle begin to spread across the known world.

900 BC Merlin is born.

700 BC The Ministry of Magic is formed and Dragon hunting of the Greater dragons is put into full effect

504 BC Harry arrives to revives his training from Adinirahc.

502 BC Adinirahc dies of old age when his dragon dies. Harry is still on the road as a mercenary while Merlin is watching him closely. Later that year Harry bonds with Silvenestri.

498 BC Harry attacks the sight of the last gate of the Elves to the land of the dead, also meet Merlin that year and also destroys the cult that was forming called the Death Bringers.

400 BC The last of the Dragon Lords dies of old age and the Ministry takes total control of the whole Wizarding world.

30 BC The battle of the Cliff is fought and the last of the Greater Dragons is killed in the fighting making all lesser dragons go wild and uncontrollable.

100 AD Merlin rumoured to have dies of old age.

860 AD Godric Gryffindor and Salazar Slytherin are born.

874 AD Rowena Ravenclaw is born.

879 AD Helga Hufflepuff is born.

889 AD Godric and Salazar join with Rowena in the founding of the school of Hogwarts.

890 AD Rowena has her first daughter and meets Helga after the birth for the first time as she was the midwife.

896 AD Hogwarts is build and the first group of student arrive the same year, Helga having a child to her lover in the Muggle world.

897 AD Godric's first born child is born to the Dumbledore line through his wife; Rowena has twin's boy and girl.

906 AD Salazar leaves after setting the Chamber of Secrets up.

910 ADSalazar has a child to an unknown witch.